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CONFIDENTIAL.

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199

F.O.
424

FURTHER CORRESPONDENCE

RESPECTING

ASIATIC TURKEY.

[In continuation of Confidential Paper No. 7308.]

199

July to December 1899.

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Further Correspondence respecting Asiatic Turkey.

[In continuation of Confidential Paper No. 7308.]

No. 1.

Sir N. O'Conor to the Marquess of Salisbury.—(*Received July* 3.)

(No. 319.)

My Lord, *Constantinople, June* 28, 1899.

WITH reference to my despatch No. 266 of the 25th ultimo I have the honour to report that Archbishop Apostolatos, the representative here of the Patriarch of Jerusalem, called a few days ago on behalf of the three Greek Patriarchs of Constantinople, Jerusalem and Alexandria, to thank me for the assistance which they were pleased to consider had been rendered by Her Majesty's Embassy, in order to defeat the election of a Russo-Syrian candidate as Patriarch of Antioch, and to ask for my continued support.

The Archbishop stated that, although Monsignor Malateos' election had been annulled and orders sent for a new election to be held, the question was not yet settled, and the Vali of Damascus, during a visit at the Russian Consulate in that town, had told the Consul before a number of prelates that he need not be alarmed, and that Monsignor Malateos would soon be reinstated. The three Patriarchs begged, therefore, that I would continue the battle on their behalf.

Your Lordship is aware, from my despatch No. 139 of the 22nd March, that I have been careful to give the Patriarchs no ground for believing that I would intervene on their behalf, and that, in point of fact, I avoided anything like a formal representation at the Sublime Porte, and merely directed Mr. Block to put in a word of warning quite privately, which he did, without being able, as he thought, to move the Ottoman Ministers from their position of blind subservience to the Palace, which had been won over to the Russian interest. I learn, however, that I am mistakenly credited at Damascus with having taken a very active part in bringing about the discomfiture of the Syrian candidate, and, under the circumstances, I am not disposed to give colour to this exaggerated belief by taking any further steps in the matter at present, unless otherwise instructed by your Lordship.

I have therefore held out no hopes to the three Patriarchs that I would again approach the Turkish Government on the subject.

The French Embassy would appear to be precluded by the general understanding between France and Russia from taking any active part in the controversy.

I have, &c.

(Signed) N. R. O'CONOR.

No. 2.

The Marquess of Salisbury to Sir N. O'Conor.

(No. 159.) *Foreign Office, July 8, 1899.*

Sir,

I HAVE received your Excellency's despatch No. 319 of the 28th ultimo, relative to a request made to you on behalf of the Greek Patriarchs of Constantinople, Jerusalem, and Antioch for your assistance, with a view to prevent the appointment of a Syrian as Patriarch of Antioch.

I approve your Excellency's attitude in the matter.

I am, &c.
(Signed) SALISBURY.

No. 3.

Sir N. O'Conor to the Marquess of Salisbury.—(Received July 10.)

(No. 325.) *Constantinople, June 30, 1899.*

My Lord,

WITH reference to my despatch No. 29 of the 2nd February, I have the honour to transmit to your Lordship herewith copy of a despatch which I have received from Her Majesty's Consul-General at Beirout, inclosing a Report by Her Majesty's Vice-Consul at Haiffa on the Russian schools in Galilee.

I have, &c.
(Signed) N. R. O'CONOR.

Inclosure 1 in No. 3.

Consul-General Drummond Hay to Sir N. O'Conor.

(No. 19.) *Beirout, June 21, 1899.*

Sir,

I HAVE the honour to transmit to your Excellency herewith a copy of a despatch from Mr. Monahan reporting on Russian schools in Galilee and a tour of inspection in that district accomplished by M. Anichof, Russian Senator and Vice-President of the Russian Palestine Society, who arrived at Haiffa about six weeks ago, and left lately for Europe.

I have, &c.
(Signed) R. DRUMMOND HAY.

Inclosure 2 in No. 3.

Vice-Consul Monahan to Consul-General Drummond Hay.

(No. 38.) *Haiffa, June 15, 1899.*

Sir,

I HAVE the honour to report that M. Anichof, Russian Senator, a Vice-President of the Russian Palestine Society, arrived here about six weeks ago, and having finished a tour of inspection of Russian schools, left Haiffa for Europe last week.

I take this opportunity to give the following information about Russian schools in Galilee:—

In Nazareth are the high schools for boys and girls, which have been there for the past eight years. The boys' school has 40 or 50 boarders and about 100 day scholars, and 7 or 8 teachers. The girls' school has no boarders, but about the same number of day pupils. The teachers in the schools at Nazareth are mostly Russian. Russian and Arabic are taught, and once or twice a-week lessons in carpentry and perhaps other trades are given to the boys. There are two doctors, one male and one female, attached to the Nazareth Mission. They give medical advice gratis.

In Haiffa there are the two secondary schools, which have existed for the last ten years. For the first four years they were under the Russian Government or Russian Synod; for the rest of the time they have been under the Russian Palestine Society. In the girls' school there are eighty girls with four mistresses, and in the boys' school there are fifty boys with two masters. Russian and Arabic are taught in both these schools. The girls here in Haiffa are all of the Orthodox Greek religion, but not the boys. Of the teaching staff at Haiffa only two mistresses are Russian.

All instruction is gratis at Nazareth and Haiffa. It is said that 700*l.* or 800*l.* a-year is spent in Haiffa alone.

In some of the Nazareth and Acre villages there are dependent schools, about thirty or forty schools in all.

The Palestine Society is about to open schools at Tyre and Acre. The Greek Orthodox Bishop at Acre is hostile to the Russian propoganda, and so is, or at least until lately was, the Bishop at Nazareth. The relations between the Greek clergy and the propoganda have in general been unfriendly, though before the arrival of the Russians there seem to have been no schools for the Orthodox communities except one at Nazareth, which the then Bishop closed when the Russians arrived. There is now a specially bitter feeling between the Russian and the Greek Orthodox clergy on account of the support given by the Russians to the party that has elected a Syrian instead of a Greek Patriarch at Antioch.

I have, &c.
(Signed) J. H. MONAHAN.

No. 4.

Sir N. O'Conor to the Marquess of Salisbury.—(Received July 10.)

(No. 332. Confidential.) *Constantinople, July 6, 1899.*

My Lord;

MR. BLOCK, Chief Dragoman to Her Majesty's Embassy, has been privately informed at the Sublime Porte that M. Spraut, a Belgian subject, enjoying the support of the King of the Belgians who has written to the Sultan on his behalf, is asking for a railway Concession from Scutari on the Bosphorus viâ Boly to Sivas and Erzinjan, the line to run north of the German Anatolian line, with branches to Sinope and Samsun. No kilometric guarantee is demanded, but all mines within 20 kilometres of the line are claimed on behalf of the Company. The matter is said to be under consideration, though without much prospect of a successful issue.

It transpired further that the Russian Ambassador had recently approached the Porte in conversation on the subject of new railways, suggesting that Russia would be willing to construct new lines in the north-east of Asia Minor to join on with the existing railway system there.

His Excellency had also sounded the Sublime Porte with regard to a line from Khanekin to Bagdad, to connect with the proposed line from the north through Persian territory to Khanekin, and had stated that Russia wished the Ottoman Government to derive profit from the Khanekin-Bagdad branch. Mr. Block gathered that the Russian Ambassador had not met with much encouragement, and it was thought at the Porte that Russia would now seek to carry on the line southwards to Bender Abbas, and that the intelligence which they had received of Russian engineers passing through Urumia pointed to an intention to push on the construction of the line through Persia.

Mr. Block was further informed that the Porte has granted permission for German engineers to study the proposed line from Konia onwards to Bagdad, but the cost is estimated at from £T. 17,000,000 to £T. 18,000,000, and the line could not be completed under seven years.

I have, &c.
(Signed) N. R. O'CONOR.

No. 5.

Sir N. O'Conor to the Marquess of Salisbury.—(*Received July* 17.)

(No. 334.) *Therapia, July* 10, 1899.

My Lord,

WITH reference to my despatch No. 232 of the 10th May last, I have the honour to transmit to your Lordship herewith copy of a despatch which I have received from the Acting British Consul at Erzeroum, reporting on the distribution of relief in that vilayet during the spring of this year.

I should be glad if your Lordship would inform the Armenian Relief Committee of the contents of Colonel Massy's despatch.

I have, &c.

(Signed) N. R. O'CONOR.

Inclosure in No. 5.

Colonel Massy to Sir N. O'Conor.

(No. 28.) *Erzeroum, June* 18, 1899.

Sir,

I HAVE the honour to submit the following account of relief operations during the present spring in the Erzeroum Vilayet.

On the 4th May I proceeded to Hussan Kaleh, accompanied by the Rev. R. Stapleton, of the American Mission. Working in conjunction with the civil authorities of the Passen district, we distributed seed grain to the value of 200*l.* I had already informed the Wali of my intentions and object, and he had sent orders for my reception to the local Kaïmakam. In thus notifying our intended relief to the Government, and in asking that an official might be present to note the relief given, I had in view the eventual responsibilty of the Government for our seed and the future crops. The official present had no voice in our operations; he merely assisted in order to show that our distributions were recognized.

I did not find the Passen district so poor as I had anticipated, yet several hundred pounds in excess of what we gave might have been applied with advantage. Good rains have since fallen, so that I trust that this district will now be independent of our aid for the future. After passing three days in this district I returned to Erzeroum.

On the 12th May I proceeded to Khunus district, again accompanied by Mr. Stapleton. We had already forwarded money for seed, but I desired to see myself what had been done. I am especially pleased that I made this journey. My visit revealed to me a state of things hardly credible. I found in most villages a band of Armenian usurers, who were giving out grain for seed to the starving population, at the rate of some four or five times the amount to be paid back after the harvest. In fact, the wretched people were to labour for practically no return. As a consequence, these usurers hailed my arrival with anything but pleasure, and as they had already cornered all the grain in those parts, our work became extremely difficult. We managed to distribute grain to the value of 225*l.*

I interviewed the Kaïmakam who came out to see me. After a visit of four days I departed, hoping that all would be well. But subsequent events have shown me that it is very difficult to circumvent the Armenian usurers. News reached me shortly afterwards that the Local Government had put obstacles in the way of our relief—evidently bribed to do so by those Armenians who were profiting largely by the starving condition of their own people. I cannot help recording my sense of disappointment and annoyance at the conduct of these unscrupulous men.

I had also desired to allot a certain sum to Baibourt district, but our last funds came too late, unfortunately, for the spring sowings. I endeavoured to place some of the money at Bitlis and some at Khunus, to receive once and a-half the amount after the harvest. This was not possible, however, and I only succeeded in placing 100*l.* in this way in Passen. The balance of our relief funds remain in hand therefore, and will be found necessary, doubtless, next winter for the Baibourt district. As rain has fallen, and is falling, we should have good crops this year, which should make most parts of the Erzeroum Vilayet independent of our further aid.

I propose employing part of our funds in hand to give employment to some of the poorer population in handicrafts which we shall organize for them.

On the whole, the present state of the Christian population of most parts of the Erzeroum Vilayet is fairly satisfactory, when it is remembered that the whole country is plunged in poverty since the massacres of four years ago.

I would add that no relief was distributed to any but to Christians, and no distinction was made as to the different creeds of those Christians who received. It is satisfactory to note, also, that no really needy Moslems came forward to ask. These people, although very poor, have other means of obtaining seed, either from the Government Agricultural Banks, or at high interest to be repaid in the autumn.

I shall inform your Excellency, in due course, as to the harvest prospects, and the prospects of the Christians for the winter.

I have, &c.

(Signed) P. H. H. MASSY,
Her Majesty's Acting Consul.

No. 6.

Sir N. O'Conor to the Marquess of Salisbury.—(*Received July* 17.)

(No. 335.) *Constantinople, July* 10, 1899.

My Lord,

I HAVE the honour to transmit to your Lordship herewith copy of a despatch which I have received from Her Majesty's Vice-Consul at Van, reporting the arrival in that city of several new officials, and adding that the general state of affairs in the vilayet is satisfactory.

I have, &c.

(Signed) N. R. O'CONOR.

Inclosure in No. 6.

Major Maunsell to Sir N. O'Conor.

(No. 28.) *Van, June* 26, 1899.

Sir,

I HAVE the honour to report the arrival of the following new officials to this vilayet:—

1. Shevki Effendi, as Defterdar from the Ministry of Finance at Constantinople.
2. Mustapha Ahsim Bey, as "Alai Bey," or Chief of Police.

Last year he was in a similar post in the Bitlis Vilayet; complaints were made against him by some officials there; he was sent to Erzingan for trial; a trial took place last winter, the result being that he was acquitted, and appointed "Alai Bey" here. His accusers are said to have been imprisoned at Erzingan.

Probably your Excellency has some information from Bitlis regarding the charges on which he was tried, as it is most difficult to get information here regarding his antecedents. He seems to be regarded as a satisfactory official here.

3. Murakhass Nerses Arslanian, as Armenian Bishop, has arrived from Constantinople, having been expected for some months.

The general situation in this vilayet is very quiet, and after the plentiful rain that has fallen, both here and in North-west Persia, great hopes are entertained of a plentiful harvest. Armenian merchants here tell me that the former considerable trade in cotton and rice between this place and North-west Persia has already shown signs of reviving after having fallen away almost to nothing last year. The general tranquillity throughout the vilayet is entirely due to the excellent manner in which the Vali, Tahir Pasha, manages affairs, and he is universally praised by both Christians and Moslems. With reference to the attempts of Zekki Pasha to stop supplies of money being sent from other vilayets to Van for the payment of troops, I am glad to say that £ T. 3,000 arrived by last post for this purpose. Hussain Pasha, the celebrated Haideranli Kurd Chief, came in here a few days ago to give evidence in the trial of the persons who attacked Dr. Belck last autumn.

He had several interviews with the Vali, and I hope will profit by the good advice given him.

At present his country is quiet; but it is interesting to note that to pass on his way home through the country of the Sheveli Kurds, just north of Van, the Government had to supply him with an escort of forty cavalry men, as his tribe and the Sheveli are at constant feud.

He has disposed of almost the whole of the supply of wheat which he hoarded last autumn to the Government to feed the soldiers here.

I have, &c.
(Signed) F. R. MAUNSELL.

No. 7.

Sir N. O'Conor to the Marquess of Salisbury.—(*Received July 17.*)

(No. 338.) *Therapia, July 11, 1899.*

My Lord,

I HAVE the honour to transmit copies of three despatches from Her Majesty's Vice-Consul at Sivas, reporting outrages committed in the village of Manjilik by certain Karapappaks and their Headman, Hussein Agha. These despatches present a gloomy picture of the terror exercised upon the unhappy village by these miscreants; the Vali apparently poses as anxious, though powerless, to help the unfortunate inhabitants, Hussein Agha, who is an Hamidié officer, enjoying the protection of the Commander-in-chief, Zekki Pasha.

I have brought the conduct of Hussein Agha to the knowledge of the Grand Vizier, who said he had no doubt that the facts were as represented. The Kurds complained of were notorious scoundrels and robbers, and had been in prison when his Highness was Governor-General. His Highness has called upon the Vali, by telegraph, for a report and for his views as to the course to be adopted, which he promised me should receive the consideration of the Ministry.

I have, &c.
(Signed) N. R. O'CONOR.

Inclosure 1 in No. 7.

Captain Anderson to Sir N. O'Conor.

(No. 5.) *Sivas, June 10, 1899.*

Sir,

I HAVE the honour to bring to your Excellency's notice the following circumstances:—

Two days' journey south of Sivas is the large Armenian village of Manjilik, which, before the massacre of four years ago, was noted for its wealth in cattle; at that time, however, all the animals were stolen, and the villagers have since been poor.

Twelve to fifteen years ago some Karapappaks settled at the village of Kushkaya, about 5 miles distant from Manjilik. The Headman of these Karapappaks is Hussein Agha, a Bimbashi of Hamidié. This man appears to look upon the village of Manjilik as a possession of his own, and its inhabitants as his slaves, as will appear from the following instances of some of his acts:—

1. Every summer for the last ten years he comes to Manjilik, and forces twelve or fifteen of the villagers to go and work for him without pay.

2. He has, it is stated, taken some twenty plots of ground belonging to the village, though I understand that at the time of his settlement in this country the boundaries of his possessions were fixed by the Government.

3. Last autumn his men stole some forty sheep from Manjilik. Petitions have been addressed to the Vali about this matter without result.

4. A young widow of Manjilik had four bullocks, purchased with money supplied through the American Mission here. These animals were lately stolen by Hussein Agha's men. The woman went herself to Hussein Agha, who told her that if she gave him £T. 4 the beasts would be returned. She paid the money and recovered them. At the same time he told her that she must become a Moslem and marry him, or there would be no peace for her.

5. Some days after the last case, several more bullocks were stolen from Manjilik. The owner, having gone to Hussein Agha, was told he must pay £T. 4 to recover them. As he was unable to do this, the animals are still missing.

The man terrorizes the villagers, who have no remedy against his persecution. They have petitioned the Vali, but no notice has been taken of their Petition.

I happened to be passing through Manjilik myself about a week ago, and though some cases of cattle stealing were reported to me, the owners seemed afraid to say much about it, and I may mention that my present information is derived from a Turkish official of Sivas, who was formerly an Armenian and inhabitant of Manjilik. It is said, I believe with truth, that Hussein Agha has made a list of twelve persons in Manjilik, from whom he intends to rob cattle in order to obtain the ransom money; the two cases cited above were on the list, and there still remain ten.

I am told, as a further instance of Hussein Agha's proceedings, that last summer he levied a sort of tax of a "roupla" of corn on each house in Manjilik, and the villagers fear he will do the same again this year.

The Vali appears to be either unwilling or afraid to take any action. I would therefore suggest that, if possible, Bimbashi Hussein Agha should be transferred to another district.

I have, &c.
(Signed) W. J. ANDERSON, *Vice-Consul.*

Inclosure 2 in No. 7.

Captain Anderson to Sir N. O'Conor.

(No. 6.) *Sivas, June 14, 1899.*

Sir,

WITH reference to my despatch No. 5 of the 10th instant, I have the honour to further report, for the information of your Excellency, as follows:—

At midnight of Sunday last, the 11th instant, eight armed Karapappaks from the village of Kush Kaya came to Manjilik and went to the house of the Armenian widow, referred to in my last despatch as having been told by Hussein Agha that she must become a Moslem and marry him. Three of the men remained on guard outside the house, whilst five entered. It appears that these told the woman they had come because she had made the complaint to the English Consul of her cattle having been stolen by Hussein Agha. They robbed her of £T. 30 or £T. 40, which she wore on her headdress, and, it seems, violated her, though, with regard to this matter, the woman is too ill, or, perhaps, too much ashamed, to say anything very definite. The men, at all events, stayed in the house about three hours. Two zaptiehs, who live in the village for its protection, did not appear during the scene, and have since left the place.

Information as to the above was given by two messengers from Manjilik, one of whom arrived last night and one this morning. They say that a number of women and children from the village are now on the way to Sivas to complain to the Government, also that the villagers are talking of going away to live elsewhere on account of the insecurity of their present existence.

I went to see the Vali this morning, reported the matter to him, and requested him to take steps for the protection of the village. He promised to send off two officers and ten men in an hour's time.

At the same time, he confessed his powerlessness to interfere with Hussein Agha in any way. He said he had made several representations about him, both to his military superior, Zekki Pasha, at Erzinjan, and also to Constantinople, but these representations appear to have had no effect. The fact of the man being a Bimbashi of Hamidié seems to protect him from all control by the Civil Government, whilst his conduct remains unnoticed by the military authorities. The Vali begged me (hoping at the same time that he may not be mentioned as having done so) to report the matter to your Excellency, and he seems honestly anxious that, if possible, steps should be taken to remove from the vilayet both Bimbashi Hussein Agha and another equally troublesome offender, Mir Ali Bey, Kaïmakam of Hamidié, residing in the village of Mir Ali Bey, eight hours south of Sivas.

I have, &c.
(Signed) W. J. ANDERSON, *Vice-Consul.*

Inclosure 3 in No. 7.

Captain Anderson to Sir N. O'Conor.

(No. 7.)
Sivas, July 1, 1899.

Sir,

IN continuation of the subject of my despatch No. 6, dated the 14th June, I have the honour to further report, for the information of your Excellency, as follows: On the 14th June the Vali, as he had promised to do, dispatched to Manjilik a Mulazim and seven zaptiehs for the protection of the village, and two days later the Mustanlik to investigate the affair.

On my return to Sivas on the 28th June, I learnt that the men concerned in the outrage upon the woman had been arrested and were now in prison at Sivas; also that thirty cattle which had been stolen from Manjilik by Hussein Agha's men two days before the arrival of the Mustanlik had been recovered by the exertions of that official. Later three more animals had been stolen, and had not yet been recovered.

I also learnt that Hussein Agha had come to Sivas and remained six days. He had several interviews with the Vali, and daily ones with the Military Commandant, with whom he seemed to be on the best of terms.

Yesterday I paid an unofficial visit to the Vali at his private house, and did not intend to mention the Manjilik business; the Vali, however, himself introduced the subject, said he was very pleased the culprits were in prison, and seemed honestly anxious that they should be punished. He also informed me that two days ago he had received a telegram from Constantinople asking for a full report of the affair.

This morning the priest of Manjilik, who is at present staying at Sivas, came to see me, and told me he had just received a letter from his village, saying that Hussein Agha's men are continually riding round the village, so that the people are afraid to go out; that Hussein Agha threatens them saying, "You think you can do something against me by making complaints at Sivas, but you shall see. Before the massacre four years ago you were rich and happy, and after eight days you were killed; now, too, after eight days you shall see what will happen." The villagers also complain that the Mulazim, who at first was favourable to them, is now inclining to Hussein Agha's side, and they do not feel safe.

I visited the Vali this morning, told him what the people of Manjilik said, and asked him to take the steps necessary to secure the safety of the village, in case Hussein Agha should attempt to carry out his threats. He replied that he had informed the Mulazim before he left Sivas that he would be held responsible for the security of Manjilik, and that he did not think there was the least chance of Hussein Agha's attempting to do anything under the present circumstances; at the same time, to satisfy me he would send further orders to the Mulazim.

This afternoon I received on very good authority information which leads me to suppose that the Vali is not acting straightforwardly. It appears that on the occasion of Hussein Agha's first visit to the Vali, during the former's stay at Sivas, the Vali expressed his displeasure plainly, and told Hussein Agha his conduct had been disgraceful. During a subsequent visit, however, it seems that Hussein Agha found means to modify the opinion of the Vali, who now, in speaking of the matter before his subordinates, has quite changed his tone, making light of Hussein Agha's conduct, and affecting to disbelieve that anything serious was done to the woman at Manjilik.

It also appears that even from the first, before Hussien Agha's visit to Sivas, the Vali was not acting openly and honestly, for I learn that with the Mulazim and zaptiehs he sent a low-class Armenian to Manjilik with a double object: firstly, to try and obtain from the woman a more or less toned-down account of what happened to her; secondly, to obtain a "Mazbata" from the villagers, expressing their satisfaction with the Vali's administration. I may here mention incidentally that I have no doubt whatever as to an outrage having been committed upon the woman, as the priest, to whom alone she made a full confession of what had been done to her, gave me the details.

I have given the above particulars at perhaps too great length, because it seems extremely probable that the Vali, in spite of his professions to me of anxiety for the punishment of Hussein Agha and his men, will in his report to Constantinople try to exculpate the man and make light of the whole affair.

It is, however, for the people of Manjilik a sufficiently serious one, and it would

seem that either Hussein Agha or the villagers will have to leave the neighbourhood. If they were at his mercy before, they will be still more so in the future, as, if he goes unpunished, he will have felt his power to commit any outrage with impunity.

I have, &c.
(Signed) W. J. ANDERSON, *Vice-Consul.*

No. 8.

Sir N. O'Conor to the Marquess of Salisbury.—(*Received July* 17.)

(No. 341.)
Therapia, July 12, 1899.

My Lord,

IN my despatch No. 304 of the 19th ultimo, I reported that I had learned from Her Majesty's Vice-Consul at Diarbekir that the leading members of the non-Protestant Christian communities in the vilayet were, at the instigation of the Vali, preparing a Petition against the American Missions in the district.

From the accompanying despatch from Mr. Jones, your Lordship will see that at the end of June the orphanages of Pallu and Chinkush were still closed, and Mr. Jones attributes the action of the Vali with regard to the above-mentioned Petition to his desire to present the Government with a reason for his persistent refusal to allow the orphanages to be reopened.

On receipt of Mr. Jones' despatch I made unofficial representations to the Grand Vizier, expressing the hope that the assurances so repeatedly given me would be fulfilled, and the establishments in question reopened.

His Highness stated that he would wait for a report on the subject promised by the Vali before taking any steps in the matter. He admitted that that officer's action did not seem to have been quite straightforward.

I have spoken on the subject of the Vali's attitude in this question to the Ministers of Foreign Affairs and of the Interior and also to the Sultan's First Secretary, who promised to see what he could do.

I should state that I have received no complaints recently from the missionaries regarding the orphanages in question.

I have, &c.
(For the Ambassador),
(Signed) M. DE BUNSEN.

Inclosure in No. 8.

Vice-Consul Jones to Sir N. O'Conor.

(No. 18.)
Diarbekir, June 20, 1899.

Sir,

I HAVE the honour to report that for some time past there has been considerable agitation amongst the native Christians in this city on account of a Petition or "Mazbata" which has been presented to all the leading members of the various Christian communities ("millets") with the exception of the Protestants, calling his Excellency the Vali's attention to the injury inflicted upon the province by the presence of the foreign Protestant Missions, and begging that steps may be taken to put a stop to the evil complained of.

Under the present Administration no Petition of the kind could be circulated amongst the natives of the city, whether Mussulmans or Rayahs, unless with the connivance of the authorities, and there is every reason to believe that the Mazbata in question was distributed by his Excellency's orders, and probably composed by him or at least under his direct supervision.

The native Christians, with some justice, no doubt regard this action of the Vali's as being prompted by a subtle policy of "divide ac impera," but I am inclined to think that the principal motive which has guided his Excellency's action in the matter has been the desire to present the Central Government at Constantinople with a reason for his persistent and obdurate refusal to allow the orphan homes at Pallu and Tchinkush to be reopened.

As illustrating the native Christian view of the matter, I may mention that a member of the Armenian Catholic "millet," speaking about the Mazbata to an Armenian Pro-

testant some days ago, made the remark, "We know that the Vali's attack is directed against the Protestants to-day, but to-morrow our turn may come."

One member of the Armenian Gregorian community, feeling that his own nation was really the object of attack, and fully aware of the unfavourable impression such action on their part must make in Europe in view of the fact that so much had been done through the instrumentality of the American missionaries to relieve the suffering amongst his own people at the time of the troubles, had plainly declared his refusal to sign the Petition, but he stood alone amongst his compatriots, and last Sunday week was summoned to the Government House, where, after an interview with the authorities, he withdrew his opposition and signed the Mazbata, and when it is considered that so many innocent persons, who were unaware of having done anything to incur the Governor-General's resentment, have recently been thrown into gaol on trumped-up charges, the Armenian referred to in all probability consulted his own personal interests by a tardy compliance with the wishes of so powerful an authority.

In this connection I may mention that the prisoners at Mardin, whose case was referred to in my despatches Nos. 11, 12, 13, and 16 of the 14th, 20th, and 25th April last and of the 6th instant, respectively, have recently been treated with greater severity by being transferred to a more filthy part of the prison, and the other day it was rumoured amongst the Moslems that the Rev. Zedros Amirkhanian had died in gaol, a rumour which, I am glad to say, has not been confirmed.

For some time past I have been endeavouring to obtain a copy of this Mazbata, but hitherto my efforts have been unsuccessful.

Those to whom the document was presented for signature were not allowed to take copy.

I have the honour to add that, as yet, neither the Armenian Bishop nor the chief representative ("Vekil") of the Protestants has been called upon to sign the Mazbata.

I have, &c.
(Signed) J. FRANCIS JONES.

No. 9.

Sir N. O'Conor to the Marquess of Salisbury.—(*Received July* 17.)

(No. 342.)
My Lord, *Therapia, July* 12, 1899.

YOUR Lordship is aware that after the affray between the Turkish troops and the revolutionists at Zronk, reported in my despatch No. 258 of the 23rd May last, Her Majesty's Vice-Consul at Van proceeded to Mush with my authorization, as it was thought that his presence there might tend to allay the anxiety prevailing among the Christian population of the district.

In my despatch No. 296 of the 10th June last, I acquainted your Lordship with the substance of a telegram addressed to me by Major Maunsell from Van on his return from Mush, giving what was, on the whole, a reassuring account of the situation.

I now have the honour to transmit herewith copy of a detailed Report with which Major Maunsell has furnished me on the condition of the district which he has visited.

From a perusal of this Report, and of the despatch which accompanied my No. 302 of the 19th ultimo, your Lordship will perceive that, besides the affair at Zronk, two affrays between Turkish regulars and revolutionists have recently occurred: the one at Taghud, on the 22nd April, in which two revolutionists and four villagers were killed, the latter probably being in sympathy with the revolutionary movement; the other at Khoshgeldy, near Boulanik, in which two revolutionists lost their lives.

On this last occasion great excesses were committed by the Kurds, for which the Kaïmakam of the district was to blame for having allowed the Hamidieh troops to be employed with the regulars in their search for revolutionists.

Major Maunsell reports that on the day of the affair at Zronk, the priest of the Agh Perig Monastery, near Mush, was killed. The Turks accused Sirop, the revolutionary leader, and his band of this murder; the Armenians ascribing it to the Kurds.

On the whole, the observations of Major Maunsell during his recent journey

produce the impression that, though the condition of affairs in the Bitlis Vilayet leaves much to be desired, the behaviour of the Turkish regular troops in their efforts to stamp out the revolutionary bands has so far been characterized by no excesses, and though sympathizers with the revolutionists have in some instances been killed, the troops have refrained from molesting innocent villagers, to whom in some cases they have been of assistance by restoring cattle lifted by the Kurds.

I have, &c.
(For the Ambassador),
(Signed) M. DE BUNSEN.

Inclosure 1 in No. 9.

Major Maunsell to Sir N. O'Conor.

(No. 26.)
Sir, *Van, June* 16, 1899.

I HAVE the honour to report, in continuation of my despatch No. 24 of the 21st May from Bitlis, that in consequence of the numerous reports I received of serious disturbances at Mush, I thought it advisable to proceed thither.

The Christian population of Bitlis continued to be excited by many rumours which I find subsequently reached Van, and, no doubt, have also been circulated in Europe.

Mr. Cole, an American missionary in Bitlis, had already telegraphed to Erzeroum just before my arrival, that the presence of a Consul was necessary for the protection of Christians; he feared also that his orphan school at Mush had been destroyed, and thought the road thither too unsafe for him to start.

The Vali of Bitlis, who only arrived eight months ago, is apparently well-meaning, but weak and fearful of responsibility, and by no means the man who should have been appointed to a vilayet with so many conflicting elements as that of Bitlis. The situation in the town is, however, saved by the energy of Ali Pasha, the Military Commandant, who with the troops at his command is always ready to put down attempts at massacre, as he did last autumn after the affair at Papshin near Bitlis.

The Vali has already tendered his resignation once, and now pleads that he is too ill to carry on his duties.

The Muavin to the Vali is a very old man, quite in his second childhood, and useless at such a post.

The Commandant, with whom I could talk as one soldier to another, seemed very despondent regarding the state of affairs, and said that were it not that the Armenians, both in the towns and villages, sympathized with and assisted the revolutionists, the capture of Sirop and his band would not be so long delayed.

He said they suspected and had proof from papers which had been found, that the Armenian Bishop of Bitlis had been distributing money from Armenian sources for relief purposes to the revolutionists; also that there were now in Bitlis many who sympathized with the revolutionists.

Ali Pasha is a straightforward soldier who has always protected Christians in the past, and I think there is a good deal of truth in what he says.

I saw the Armenian Bishop of Bitlis, and he did not impress me favourably.

Both the Vali and Commandant were seriously disturbed at the prospect of Armenian refugees driven from the Caucasus arriving in this country. Some of them, they said, would certainly be either revolutionists or hold revolutionary ideas, while others may possibly have served their time in the Russian army, and would be able to drill their compatriots here.

Should they arrive the difficulties of the Government would be greatly increased and grave disturbances sure to occur. Perhaps, as the Commandant hinted, this is what the Russians desire by forcing them over the frontier.

I passed round the southern side of Sassun, and ascended the valley of the Kulp River to reach Mush.

The regular troops from Mush and Bitlis had entered the northern part of Sassun, but finding no arms hidden in the cave to which they had been directed, or any trace of Sirop and his band, they returned.

Detachments still watch the northern approaches to the Sassun Valleys. Only regular troops were employed, and no outrages were committed.

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The country along the foot of the hills south of Sassun is chiefly inhabited by Kurds, nomad in summer, but settled in villages during the winter.

A list of these tribes with their Headmen is attached.

A few Christian villages are to be found, some Chaldean and some Armenian.

Melkishan is a thriving Armenian village in this Kurd country. It was the only place in that neighbourhood where we could obtain supplies of barley. The inhabitants seemed on very good terms with their Kurdish neighbours.

Some twenty years ago a large Yezidi population existed in the Kharzan Kaza, but with the exception of a few small villages they have now disappeared.

These Kurds have no rifles, and only a few flint locks, the usual arms being a long curved sword and a small buckler. One Chief came out to meet me with a bodyguard of men with battle-axes.

No Hamidié regiments are formed from these tribes; who, somewhat unwillingly, supply a certain number of regular troops. Most of these recruits are drafted to Yemen, which does not improve the taste of these people for Turkish military service.

While I passed up the Kulp Valley, the large tribes of Bekranli and Badikanli were scattered along the road on their way to their summer pastures.

They seemed to be carrying out their migration in an orderly way, without robbing villages *en route*, as sometimes occurs with other tribes.

Among them I met an Armenian priest of a village in the Mush Plain journeying up from Urfa, who had joined this tribe on his way for safety, and he gave a good account of them.

I think both these tribes had a hand in the first Sassun massacres, and a Chief told me that if the Government wished to capture the revolutionists, they should permit them to join in the chase, as they knew the mountains much better than the regular troops.

The Government has, however, rejected any offer of assistance from them.

The Kaïmakam of Kulp Kaza lives at Pasur, a pleasant village with gardens, in which sericulture is carried on, not far from the right bank of the stream.

Yusuf Agha and Hussein Agha are influential Kurds in the neighbourhood, who protected the Christians during the massacres, and the condition of the small Armenian villages in the Kulp Kaza is thriving, and the inhabitants are on good terms with their Kurdish neighbours.

The impression I gained among these Kurds is that they are extremely ignorant, and half-savage, but with no rooted antipathy to Christians unless their fanaticism and latent cruelty is roused by direct incitement to massacre on the part of the Government. Much depends on their Sheikhs and tribal leaders, whom they follow blindly, and whom, if of bad character, generally gain an evil reputation for the whole tribe.

On reaching the Mush Plain, the villages were still excited by the movements of the revolutionists, and the destruction of Gurgen's band at Zronk.

I had several opportunities of speaking to villagers alone. They always referred to the disturbance at Zronk as a massacre by Government of innocent peasants, and would never agree that they were revolutionists killed with arms in their hands against the Government. Some villagers even referred to Sirop and Gurgen as Sirop Pasha and Gurgen Pasha, and spoke of them as national heroes.

How far this sympathy extends it is impossible to say, but I should think most of the young men of these villages secretly sympathize with the revolutionists.

On reaching Mush I found that the Mutessarif had already left for Constantinople, chiefly owing to the representations made against him by the Vali of Bitlis, who was his enemy.

The Mutessarif had a good reputation as a protector of the Christians. The present Acting Governor is Salih Bey, a Mir Alai, and the Military Commandant of the place—possibly a good soldier, but wanting in tact, and too overbearing as a civil Governor at such a disturbed and critical time.

For this reason, I ventured to suggest to your Excellency by telegraph, the advisability of hastening the arrival, presumably from Constantinople, of the newly-appointed Mutessarif.

After the affair at Zronk, the town was much excited by the death there of Talib Effendi, a prominent Notable of the place. Shortly after, a Turkish zaptieh was killed on the hill just south of Mush, while carrying orders to the troops while watching Sassun. The Government affirms that this was done by Sirop to gain possession of the letters, while the Armenians say it was done by a Turkish comrade.

When his body was brought into Mush, the Turks, seeing that it was a Moslem, the

Armenians closed their shops and fled in a panic. Two Armenians were killed before the disturbance ceased.

I camped at Zronk, whence, during the fight with revolutionists, the inhabitants had fled, driving off their cattle and taking some of their goods to Kurdish villages.

Some days previous to my arrival, a company of regular troops had been quartered in the village engaged in returning cattle and goods that had been appropriated by the Kurds. This was now almost completed.

I visited the shed which was the scene of the struggle, and, contrary to many reports I had received, nothing had been burned.

The firing had gone on chiefly through the closed door, neither side seeming to wish to view their opponents. Others were killed through a hole in the side wall.

None of the houses were burned, nor had any of the neighbouring villages suffered at all. This village possesses some 2,000 cattle, most of which the soldiers had succeeded in restoring.

These villages on the Mush Plain are in a far more prosperous condition than any near Van.

From here I passed into the Bulanik Plain and visited the large Armenian villages of Liz and Gop among others.

The Bulanik Plain is a region of extreme fertility, and is one of the granaries of the country. The villages have large number of sheep and cattle, and stand in no need of relief distribution. The situation in this kaza was not so satisfactory, as here are portions of the large Kurd tribes of Jibranli and Hassananli who supply Hamidié.

The Kaïmakam, who lives at Gop, is well meaning, but weak, easy going, and incapable; he leaves all decisive action in the hands of the "Mal Mudiri," the Mudir of Liz, a local Kurd named Khalaf Effendi, and the "nufus katibi," Emin Effendi.

Regular troops are in small detachments in all the Christian villages, but the services of the Hamidié cavalry are employed here.

I have mentioned that among the Nomads, I have met many who had manly traits, but the change was striking on meeting some twenty Hamidié cavalry, collected by the Mudir of Liz at that place, to assist him in searching the neighbourhood for revolutionists. The infamous type of these villains' faces would be quite sufficient to condemn them to the gallows in any civilized country, and this is presumably the result of some years of the licensed brigandage, which constitutes service in one of His Majesty the Sultan's Hamidié cavalry regiments.

A short time previously a descent had been made on the village of Khoshgeldi by a force of regular troops, assisted by fifty Hamidié under the "Mal Mudiri" of Bulanik.

Two revolutionists were killed, but great excesses, violation of women, hanging them up by their hair to extract information regarding the revolutionists, and such crimes were committed by the Kurds.

It would be well to replace the Kaïmakam of Bulanik by some more energetic official who would not sanction the employment of Hamidié.

In these villages also there are undoubted sympathizers with revolutionists, and after the above events six men are said to have fled from Khoshgeldi to join the revolutionists.

I passed over the hills from Gop to Akhlat, whence I crossed to Van by boat.

A curious incident occurred while crossing these hills, which illustrates the ease with which a traveller may be mistaken for revolutionists.

I had reached the summit of the hill with my Dragoman and two zaptiehs, and had halted there. Some Kurds in the neighbourhood raised a hue and cry, shouting we were revolutionists, and ran up to the zaptieh, who was with the baggage a short distance in rear, saying that the summit of the hill was lined by revolutionists.

The matter was, of course, soon cleared up. Between Gop and Akhlat is a colony of seven Circassian villages; in Kutig, the chief of which I visited, a Circassian Bey.

In the village were some forty Armenian houses, who are protected by the Circassians and live contentedly.

It was interesting to note the utter contempt with which these Circassians spoke of the Kurds, who leave them very severely alone.

The situation in the Bitlis Vilayet is complicated in many ways.

The avowed intention of the revolutionists and their sympathizers is the usual Hinchak doctrine of stirring up the country with a view of provoking massacres and disturbances so as to direct the attention of Europe to the country.

The Government, on its side, is doing its best to stamp out revolutionists and protect innocent villagers, but, what with weak and incapable under officials, the employment in some cases of Hamidié cavalry, the fanatical zeal of Moslems roused by the death of their compatriots at the hands of the revolutionists, and the provocative mixture of

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timidity and vanity on the part of the Armenians themselves, they have a difficult task.

No general massacres are likely to occur, but isolated attacks and outbreaks, such as have already occurred, are likely to happen again. Feeling runs high, and the most conflicting accounts of any event are to be found from both sides.

On the 7th May, the Vartabed or priest of the Monastery of Aghperig, near Mush, was killed. The Government dispatched troops to the Monastery and made inquiries, after which they fixed the blame on Sirop and the revolutionists.

The Armenian accounts which I have received give the names of the Sassun Kurds, Sassunli Mirzoyan Yusuf, Kapoyun Telo Araboghlu Ali, and Rashid Oghlu Bairam, as the real persons who committed the outrage.

The revolutionists continue to terrorize the country, and threaten any of their compatriots whom they think are likely to betray them.

The country is well watched by regular troops now, and it is to be hoped that a final blow will be dealt soon by the capture of Sirop and his band.

I have, &c.
(Signed) F. R. MAUNSELL.

Inclosure 2 in No. 9.

List of Tribes in the South of the Bitlis Vilayet and East of Diarbekir Vilayet.

Name	Number which they can furnish	Name of Principal Chief.
Bekiran	Hawan	Mahmud Agha.
Dodan	Kizan and Zeidi	
Alikanli	One section in Khizan Kaza ..	Omer Agha
	Another in Kharzan ..	Bakir Agha.
Penjiran	Kharzan	
Mahmedie	Shirwan	Omer Agha, Hassan Agha.
Bekranli	Batman	Redirkhan Agha.
Badikanli	Batman	Jenghis Agha.
Kharzanli	Kharzan	Suleiman Agha.
Khianli	Khian	Khalil Agha
Sassunli	Sassun	Hussein Agha and Yusuf Agha.
Kulp	Kulp	Hajji Agha.
Silwan	Silwan	Bisher Agha.
Sheikhdedin	Batman	Fero Ibibi Agha.
Mala	Kharzan	Haso Ibrahim Agha.
Bisheri	Bisheri	Omer Salon Agha.
Moka	Kharzan	Ibrahim Agha.
Sulcghi	Kharzan	
Zengan	Zirko Nahle Shirwan ..	
Ammuckan	Kunuk Dere Bitlis ..	
Sulukan	Shirwan	
Reshkolan	Shirwan	
Dunheli	South of Bitlis	

No. 10.

Sir N. O'Conor to the Marquess of Salisbury.—(Received July 24.)

(No. 343.)
My Lord, *Therapia, July 14, 1899.*

I HAVE the honour to transmit herewith copy of a telegram received on the 3rd instant from Her Majesty's Vice-Consul at Van giving a circumstantial account of an incursion of a revolutionary band across the Persian frontier near Bashkalé.

I was about to report this occurrence to your Lordship by last messenger, when I received a second telegram from Major Maunsell to the effect that no revolutionary attack took place, the whole story being an elaborate invention of Shereef Bey, who, as your Lordship is aware from my despatch No. 250 of the 18th May last, may have to stand his trial for some of the many outrages which he has committed.

A third telegram from Major Maunsell (copy also inclosed) leaves me in considerable doubt whether Major Maunsell still adheres to this opinion.

The Grand Vizier, of whom I have more than once made inquiry on the subject, professes to have no doubt that the raid really occurred. The intelligence received by the Porte points to the revolutionists having come from Persia and not from Russia as at first conjectured by Major Maunsell, and I learn from the Sultan's First Secretary that representations have been made by the Porte to the Persian Government with a view to the prevention of such incidents in the future. The Persian Government have promised to do what they can, but admit their inability to effectually watch so long and difficult a frontier.

I have, &c.
(Signed) N. R. O'CONOR.

Inclosure 1 in No. 10.

Major Maunsell to Sir N. O'Conor.

(Telegraphic.) *Van, July 2, 1899.*

TWO days ago band of Armenian revolutionaries estimated at fifty, but probably fewer, crossed the frontier east of Bashkalé, attacked Shereef Bey, Kurdish Chief, who drove them off, losing one man and killing three revolutionaries, after which he sent information to Government. Yesterday revolutionaries reached Finis, two hours' east of Koshun, and were met by a company of regular infantry who killed three and took one prisoner. Remainder are now surrounded, and Vali hopes to induce them to surrender. Strict orders sent by Vali to prevent Kurds joining in fight or pillaging villagers. Zekki Pasha has also ordered Commandant to assist Vali in every way with troops and protect innocent villagers.

Town is perfectly quiet, and there is no sympathy with revolutionaries, who probably came through direct from Russia, as no news of their presence came from Persia. Reports from Azerbaijan state that country is in extremely lawless condition, and Government very weak; infantry battalion has been sent from here a week ago to reinforce frontier posts.

Inclosure 2 in No. 10.

Major Maunsell to Sir N. O'Conor.

(Telegraphic.) *Van, July 5, 1899.*

MY telegram of 2nd July.

It has now become clear that no revolutionary attack took place, but that the whole was an elaborate plot on the part of Shereef Bey in order to gain credit at Constantinople and avoid trial and imprisonment for which fresh orders have arrived. He so spread information that three Governors sent identical reports, and Government concentrated troops with great rapidity, but found no trace of dead, and that prisoner was a villager. Troops returned, and country perfectly quiet.

Shereef Bey recently executed a raid into Persia, and it is important that orders for imprisonment should be executed.

Inclosure 3 in No. 10.

Major Maunsell to Sir N. O'Conor.

(Telegraphic.) *Van, July 7, 1899.*

ZEKKI PASHA complains against Vali for not moving troops sooner in order to catch supposed revolutionaries, and allowing them to escape. Vali did everything possible, and is not to blame.

No. 11.

Sir N. O'Conor to the Marquess of Salisbury.—(Received July 24.)

(No. 343 A.)
My Lord, *Constantinople, July* 14, 1899.

I HAVE the honour to transmit to your Lordship herewith copy of a despatch which I have received from Her Majesty's Vice-Consul at Van reporting the steps taken by the Vali to recover for their owners cattle lifted by the Kurds from Armenian villages, and the protection afforded by Zekki Pasha, the Commander-in-chief, to the notorious Kurdish Chief Shereef Bey.

I have, &c.
(Signed) N. R. O'CONOR.

Inclosure in No. 11.

Major Maunsell to Sir N. O'Conor.

(No. 27.)
Sir, *Van, June* 20, 1899.

I HAVE the honour to report that some three weeks ago heavy rain fell in the neighbourhood of Van, the immediate result being a considerable lowering of the price of grain in the town, and a great improvement in the prospect of a good harvest, which now promises very well.

Some isolated instances of cattle lifting from some of the Armenian villages in the neighbourhood by the local Kurds have occurred; the Vali pursued the offenders vigorously, with the result that the cattle were restored, and the offenders imprisoned.

Some of the culprits were Hamidié lieutenants.

Zekki Pasha has tried to raise difficulties in the way of the Vali dealing with these and other Hamidié who commit crime.

One method, which he has employed successfully before, was to induce the stoppage of supplies of money from outside to this vilayet for the payment of the troops.

This was actually intended to be carried out, but, on the Vali making representations to the Sublime Porte, the necessary money is now being sent.

In the case of the notorious Shereef Bey, for whose trial and imprisonment awaiting trial an Imperial Iradé had been obtained; through the influence of Zekki Pasha he has been permitted to return to his village from here.

It is still possible, seeing that his trial has not yet commenced, that he may have to be brought in here again.

It would be a most notorious interference with justice if Zekki Pasha were permitted to interfere with and stop the trial altogether.

I have, &c.
(Signed) F. R. MAUNSELL.

No. 12.

Sir N. O'Conor to the Marquess of Salisbury.—(Received July 24.)

(No. 352.)
My Lord, *Constantinople, July* 20, 1899.

WITH reference to my despatch No. 307 of the 3rd ultimo, I have the honour to transmit to your Lordship herewith copy of a despatch which I have received from Her Majesty's Vice-Consul at Diarbekir reporting the continuance of the revolt of the Kurds in the Dersim district.

I have, &c.
(Signed) N. R. O'CONOR.

Inclosure in No. 12.

Vice-Consul Jones to Sir N. O'Conor.

(No. 20.)
Sir, *Diarbekir, July* 4, 1899.

WITH reference to the revolt in the Dersim district, reported in my despatch No. 15 of the 3rd ultimo, I have the honour to report that, according to information received by the last mail from Kharput, it appears that the district in question continues to be disturbed.

An Armenian named Bedros Paghtidjian, of Chemishghezek, having been invited by a Kurdish Chief to bring some goods to the mountains, obeyed the summons, but on the way, fell in with a band of the Khoja Ushaghis, who robbed him of all his goods, allowing him, however, to escape with his life.

The Mutessarif of the Dersim suggested that the Chief of the Idaré should come to Khozat for a conference, to which the latter replied that he would come on condition that an Adjutant "Kol Aghassi" and a Captain "Yuzbashi" should be sent to him as hostages, but not otherwise.

My informant adds that the authorities seem to be taking no steps to reduce the rebel leader to submission. Nothing, however, is said with regard to any participation in the revolt by other Kurdish tribes, from which it may be assumed that the disturbance is limited to the tribe in question.

I have, &c.
(Signed) J. FRANCIS JONES.

No. 13.

Sir N. O'Conor to the Marquess of Salisbury.—(Received July 24.)

(No. 353.)
My Lord, *Therapia, July* 20, 1899.

I HAVE the honour to acknowledge the receipt of your Lordship's despatch No. 162 of the 11th instant, forwarding copy of a question asked by Mr. H. Roberts in the House of Commons on the subject of raids said to have been made recently on Armenians in the Provinces of Van, Bitlis, and Erzeroum, and requesting to be supplied with the latest information which I have received in regard to the position of the Armenians in those provinces.

I do not know that I have anything to add to the particulars furnished on this subject in my despatches No. 258 of the 23rd May, No. 296 of the 10th June, No. 302 of the 19th June, No. 342 of the 12th instant, and No. 343A of the 14th instant, which contain the latest intelligence furnished by Her Majesty's Vice-Consul at Van.

As your Lordship is aware, after the affray at Zronk on the 11th May, reported in my despatch No. 258 of the 23rd May, Major Maunsell proceeded to Mush with my authorization, as it was believed that his presence there would tend to allay the anxiety of the Christian population of that neighbourhood. The reports furnished by him are of a reassuring character. There have been several conflicts between Turkish regular troops and the revolutionists in the Bitlis Vilayet, and quite recently intelligence has been received of an affray near the Persian frontier with revolutionists, believed to have come from Persia. Exaggerated reports of these occurrences may have found their way into the newspapers, but from Major Maunsell's despatches they do not appear, except in one instance where excesses were committed, to have possessed any very serious character.

The situation in the districts, referred to in Mr. Roberts' question, may, I think, be briefly described as follows: There is considerable activity among the revolutionists, with whom many of the population are in secret, if not open, sympathy. The Government is endeavouring to stamp out the revolutionary movement, and it is against the revolutionists only that the raids to which Mr. Roberts appears to refer are directed. As a general rule, the Turkish regulars are the only troops employed in this work, and, according to my present information, it was only in the affair at Khoshgheldy (see my

despatch No. 342 of the 12th instant), when, through the folly, or worse, of the Kaïmakam, the Hamidié troops were called in to assist, that excesses are reported.

I have, &c.
(Signed) N. R. O'CONOR.

No. 14.

Sir N. O'Conor to the Marquess of Salisbury.—(Received July 21.)

(No. 356.)
My Lord, *Therapia, July 20, 1899.*

I HAVE the honour to report that I recently received a visit from the Armenian Patriarch, who called to express his thanks for the valuable assistance given by this Embassy in his representations on behalf of the Armenian community, and to beg me to continue my efforts in this direction.

His Beatitude described the situation as far from satisfactory; Armenians, he said, were harassed in their daily occupations, denied liberty of circulation throughout the country, and received very insufficient protection from the attacks of the Kurds. His Beatitude said, nevertheless, there was an improvement in the general situation, which he hoped would continue.

Some days later the Patriarch had an interview with Mr. Block, Chief Dragoman of the Embassy, in which, after alluding to the recent disturbances in the Vilayet of Bitlis, of which he said the Porte and the Palace were inclined to make light, his Beatitude spoke hopefully of the present attitude of the Sultan with regard to the Armenian question. He hoped that in a few days an Irade would be issued for the settlement of several important questions.

The Patriarch said he had been in favour of the Mixed Council of the Patriarchate to present a Petition to His Majesty, praying for the redress of the grievances of the community, but that, on hearing this intention, the Sultan had sent for him, and, after expressing his annoyance at the projected Petition, called upon him forthwith to formulate the demands of the Armenians. He had enumerated the desired concessions, and His Majesty had promised to grant them without delay. The concessions demanded by the Patriarch were the following:—

1. Permission for the Armenians to circulate freely in the provinces, and to visit and leave Constantinople at pleasure.
2. Permission to hold the election of the Catholicos of Sis (see Mr. de Bunsen's despatch No. 360 of the 13th June, 1898).
3. Leave to repair or rebuild certain schools and churches.
4. The release of certain prisoners condemned for alleged political agitation.
5. Leave to found an orphanage in Constantinople.
6. Payment of certain debts due to the Patriarchate.

I understand that notwithstanding the assurances of the Sultan, no Irade for the granting of these demands has yet reached the Porte, and that if no such measure emanates from the Palace before the end of this week, the Petition, at which the Sultan expressed so much annoyance, is to be presented to His Majesty.

I have, &c.
(Signed) N. R. O'CONOR.

No. 15.

The Marquess of Salisbury to Sir N. O'Conor.

(No. 182.)
Sir, *Foreign Office, July 28, 1899.*

I HAVE received your Excellency's despatch No. 341 of the 12th July relating to the Orphanages at Pallu and Chinkush.

Your Excellency's proceedings with a view to obtaining the reopening of these institutions are approved.

I am, &c.
(Signed) SALISBURY.

No. 16.

The Marquess of Salisbury to Sir N. O'Conor.

(No. 183.)
Sir, *Foreign Office, July 28, 1899.*

I HAVE received your Excellency's despatch No. 338 of the 11th July relating to the outrages committed by certain Karapappaks and their Headman, Hussein Agha, in the village of Mutjilik.

The action taken by your Excellency in the matter, as reported in the above-mentioned despatch, is approved.

I am, &c.
(Signed) SALISBURY.

No. 17.

Sir N. O'Conor to the Marquess of Salisbury.—(Received July 31.)

(No. 100. Commercial. Confidential.)
My Lord, *Constantinople, July 24, 1899.*

WITH reference to my despatches No. 312, Confidential, of the 11th May last, No. 72, Commercial, of the 13th May, and No. 332, Confidential, of the 6th July, reporting on the [illegible] of railways in Asia Minor, I have [illegible] to enclose copies of three documents bearing upon the German demands for the extension of their lines to Bagdad and Basra, as well as the arrangements effected between the Anatolian Railway Company and the Smyrna-Cassaba Railway Administration.

The first enclosure is a memorandum (in French) by one of the officials connected with the President of the Anatolian Railway, Dr. Zander, on behalf of the Company, to His Majesty the Sultan, soliciting the issue of an Imperial Irade in favour of the Company for the Concession of the extension of the Angora or Konia lines to Bagdad and Basra.

The petitioner states that the plans of this extension, which also include a network of lines covering the whole of Asia Minor, have already been submitted to, and received the approval of, the Military Commission sitting at Yildiz.

It is proposed to carry the main line on from Angora through Yozgat, Kaisariye, Marash, Aintab, Orfa, Diarbekir, Mardin, Midiyad, Mossul, Altun-Kemprei, Kerkuk, Tauk, to Bagdad. The line from Bagdad is optional, but, if constructed, would pass through Kerbela, Nedjef, and Sukes-Sheyukh.

A branch is proposed from Aintab to the Gulf of Alexandretta, passing through Tchorlus-Keui and Missis, and it is also proposed to connect the Konia line with the main artery by a branch to Marash passing by Adana.

Before coming to a final decision with respect to this extension, the Anatolian Railway Company deemed it essential to consider the different interests of the two other Railway Companies in Asia Minor, &c., the Cassaba and Aidin, and endeavour to bring about an arrangement, if not a fusion, of all the lines, in a manner satisfactory to those concerned.

The negotiations entered into with the Cassaba Company for an arrangement and a fusion of the lines had been satisfactorily concluded. Similar overtures had been made to the Aidin Company, but had so far not proved successful. The Anatolian Railway Company, however, considers it necessary to continue the negotiations, offering conditions which should prove satisfactory to the English shareholders, and expresses the hope that a fusion or arrangement will sooner or later be effected with this Company.

The conditions of the arrangement between the Anatolian Railway Company and the Cassaba Railway Company are the following:—

The two Companies retain their independence in the working of their respective systems until the Concession of the line to Bagdad (Basra being optional) has been obtained.

The two Companies shall co-operate in the building of the Bagdad–Basra extension.

The two Companies shall have the right to traffic on each other's lines, and the

junction of the lines must be effected so that the waggons have the same capacity and volume.

A Commission is to be summoned by the Contracting Parties for the framing of a uniform tariff of rates, which will have to be submitted to the Government for approval.

The Anatolian Railway Company will appoint two permanent members to sit on the Board of the Cassaba Railway Administration, and two members of the Cassaba Railway Administration will likewise sit on the Anatolian Railway Board.

The capital necessary for the construction of the Bagdad line must be fully covered and guaranteed in the following proportions:—

40 per cent. by the Deutsche Bank, on behalf of the Anatolian Railway Company.

40 per cent. by the Imperial Ottoman Bank, for the Cassaba Railway Company.

The remaining 20 per cent. is to be reserved, and to be subscribed for by Ottoman financial establishments.

Upon the issue of the Imperial Iradé approving and granting the Concession to Bagdad, and after the line is entirely built, the two Companies are to be amalgamated into one Company, which is to be called "Compagnie Impériale Ottomane de Sa Majesté Impériale le Sultan Abd-el-Hamid II."

The document marked (11) reviews the financial position of the Anatolian Railway Company with regard to the general increase of the traffic receipts, and the corresponding decrease of the liabilities of the Government in respect of the kilometric guarantees.

These guarantees amount to an annual sum of 11,242,130 fr., but the actual amount paid to the Company since 1895 has not been more than half that sum.

	Fr.
In 1895 the Government paid	5,271,000
In 1896 " "	3,819,000
In 1897 " "	2,029,000

The Company has been able (with two exceptions, 1891 and 1892, when the dividend was 4½ per cent.) to pay a uniform dividend of 5 per cent.; and has also been able to form a reserve fund, which, in 1897, amounted to 10,304,908 fr. It is therefore confidently expected that in a very short time the Government will be relieved of its obligations towards the Company owing to the steady increase of the railway receipts.

These facts amply prove the flourishing state of the existing lines; and the Company, therefore, basing itself on the preferential rights it has acquired, and upon the fact of possessing the means, has decided to demand the Concession of the Bagdad–Basra line without asking for any kilometric guarantees.

The Company finds it necessary to point out that a capital of 10,000,000*l.* will be required to build the 2,200 kilom. of the new railway: in order, therefore, to help the Company in assuring its financial group of the continued interest and support of the Government, it is suggested that the Government should, on its own initiative, propose to continue the payment of the guarantees already granted for the existing lines.

These guarantees, it is suggested, should be paid in full into the Imperial Ottoman Bank for a term of six years, the Company engaging itself to complete the line within that period.

On the completion of the line, the shares and debentures of the Anatolian and Cassaba Railway Companies, as well as the capital necessary for the construction of the new line, shall be converted into a new issue, which shall not exceed 20,000,000*l.*

The funds deposited at the Ottoman Bank will then form a basis for guaranteeing an interest of 3 per cent. on the new issue.

I have, &c.
(Signed) N. R. O'CONOR.

Inclosure 1 in No. 17.

Memorandum.

(Traduction.)

LA haute sollicitude et le génie clairvoyant de Sa Majesté Impériale le Sultan ont en vue le progrès, le développement des affaires industrielles, et, surtout, l'établissement de lignes ferrées dans le territoire de son immense Empire pour le bien-être de ses sujets.

Sa Majesté Impériale a bien voulu accorder la Concession de la ligne Haidar-Pacha–Angora à M. Kaulla qui, sous ses auspices, est arrivé à fonder, en 1889, une Société dont les capitaux sont garantis par la Deutsche Bank et fit plus tard la prolongation d'Ismidt–Eski-Shehr à Angora. Cette réussite a provoqué peu après, la prolongation d'Eski-Shehr–Konia; son trafic actuel se fait sur un territoire de 1,023 kilom.

La Compagnie du Chemin de Fer d'Antolie, pour se montrer digne de la haute protection et de la bienveillance de Sa Majesté Impériale le Sultan, a pris toutes les mesures nécessaires pour faciliter le commerce et contenter le public par le choix de son personnel et son mode d'exploitation. Elle se trouve très heureuse de voir son trafic s'élever de jour en jour et de constater qu'elle est en bons rapports avec le Gouvernement Impérial. Elle voit aussi avec pleine satisfaction que les garanties kilométriques accordées par le Gouvernement Impérial viennent d'être diminuées de moitié.

Il y a quelques années, la Compagnie, avec l'autorisation du Gouvernement Impérial, s'est occupée aussi de la prolongation de ses lignes ferrées et a fait les études nécessaires jusqu'à Bagdad–Bassrah (embranchement Golfe Alexandrette).

Mais avant de prendre une décision définitive, pour éviter tout empêchement et écarter toute intervention éventuelle, la Compagnie a cru utile et nécessaire de prendre en sérieuse considération les intérêts des plus anciennes Compagnies qui trafiquent en Asie Mineure (Aidin et Cassaba) ainsi que leur position envers le Gouvernement Impérial et, pour ne pas nuire à leurs intérêts elle a fait des démarches nécessaires afin d'arriver à une fusion en ce qui concerne les réseaux en Asie Mineure.

Sa Majesté le Sultan n'ignore pas que la Compagnie d'Anatolie est entrée en pourparlers avec celle de Cassaba et qu'elle est arrivée à un accord et à une fusion assurant les intérêts de ses actionnaires.

En ce qui concerne la Compagnie Aidin tous les efforts et même les sécurités financières présentées par la Compagnie d'Anatolie, n'ont abouti qu'à une réponse évasive d'où découle une fin de non-recevoir.

La Compagnie d'Anatolie se basant sur la haute protection de Sa Majesté Impériale le Sultan, croit de son devoir de poursuivre ses démarches avec d'autres modalités, donnant tous les garanties possibles aux actionnaires Anglais et elle espère tôt ou tard arriver à un accord ou fusion.

Selon le désir exprimé en haut lieu, la Compagnie d'Anatolie a l'honneur de soumettre en résumé les clauses de son entente avec la Compagnie de Cassaba:—

1. Les deux Compagnies sont libres comme auparavant de leur actions sur leurs lignes jusqu'à l'obtention de la Concession de la ligne Bagdad, facultativement, Bassrah.

2. Une Commission instituée par les deux Compagnies élaborera et arrêtera un tarif uniforme lequel sera soumis à l'approbation du Gouvernement Impérial.

3. La jonction des deux lignes se fera de manière à ce que les wagons aient le même volume et la même capacité.

4. Les deux Compagnies auront le droit de trafiquer réciproquement sur les deux lignes.

5. Les doux Compagnies, d'un commun accord, feront la prolongation jusqu'à Bagdad et, facultativement, jusqu'à Bassrah.

6. La Compagnie d'Anatolie nommera deux membres permanents dans le Conseil de la Compagnie de Cassaba, et la Compagnie de Cassaba nommera aussi deux membres dans le Conseil de la Compagnie d'Anatolie.

7. Tous les capitaux nécessaires pour la construction de la ligne de Bagdad seront couverts et garantis: les 40 pour cent par la Deutche Bank pour compte de la Compagnie d'Anatolie, les autres 40 pour cent par la Banque Impériale Ottomane pour compte des actionnaires de la Compagnie de Cassaba. Les 20 pour cent restants

seront, selon le désir de Sa Majesté le Sultan, réservés à la souscription d'établissements financiers Ottomans.

8. Lorsque cette Concession (Bagdad) homologuée par Iradé Impérial sera accordée et que la ligne sera construite, alors, les Compagnies fusionnées formeront une seule et même Société Impériale Ottomane, sous le nom de Compagnie Impériale Ottomane de Sa Majesté Impériale le Sultan Abd-ul-Hamid II.

Lors de la prolongation d'Ismidt–Angora, malgré les autres études qu'elle avait faites, le Conseil d'Administration de la Compagnie d'Anatolie a choisi la ligne la plus fertile et, au point de vue stratégique, la plus importante.

Le tracé de cette ligne, approuvé par la Haute Commission Militaire du Palais, comporte des embranchements sur tout le territoire de l'Asie Mineure. D'après les plans ci-annexés soumis à Sa Majesté Impériale le Sultan, le tracé part d'Angora passant par Yozgat, Kaiserié, Marash, Aintab, embranchement ; d'Aintab à Tcherkes-Keuy-Missia, Golfe-d'Alexandrette.

D'Aintab, la ligne principale continue sur Ourfa, Diarbekir, Mardin, Midiyâd, Mossoul, Altun-Koupru, Kerkouk, Tkouk, Bagdad. Et la prolongation facultative de Bagdad–Kerbela, Nédjef Souk-es-Sheyouk, Bassrah.

De Konia à Adana, Marash, Aintab, et suite comme ci-dessus.

La Compagnie se met à la disposition du Gouvernement Impérial pour toute modification des plans ci-annexés concernant ce réseau.

La Compagnie d'Anatolie étant reconnaissante à Sa Majesté Impériale le Sultan pour ses bienfaits et sa haute sollicitude, ne vise qu'à réaliser selon sa volonté souveraine le grand projet de Bagdad et à construire à l'avenir de nouvelles lignes ferrées en Asie Mineure.

Disposant de tous les capitaux nécessaires (garantis par la Deutsche Bank et la Banque Impériale Ottomane) à l'exécution des engagements qu'elle aura à prendre envers le Gouvernement Impérial, la Compagnie vient de solliciter de Sa Majesté Impériale le Sultan de vouloir bien promulguer un Iradé en principe au nom de la Compagnie, concernant la ligne de prolongation d'Angora–Bagdad ou de Konia–Bagdad et toutes deux jusqu'à Bassrah.

C'est alors que tous les obstacles concernant le grand artère de Bagdad seront aplanis et que sera résolue cette question qui préoccupe depuis tant d'années le Gouvernement Impérial.

(Signé) Dr. ZANDER, *Président du Conseil d'Administration du Chemin de Fer d'Anatolie.*

Le 29 Mai (10 *Juin*), 1899.

Inclosure 2 in No. 17.

Memorandum.

(Traduction.)

NOUS avons l'honneur, d'après le désir exprimé, de soumettre en haut lieu la situation financière ci-après :

La Compagnie d'Anatolie fondée en 1889 trafique sur un parcours de 1,023 kilom.

Le Gouvernement Impérial, lors des Concessions, a accordé à la Compagnie les garanties kilométriques suivantes :—

	Fr.
Haïdar-Pacha–Ismidt parcours 92 kilom. garantie	10,300
Ismidt–Angora parcours 486 kilom. garantie	15,000

Quant à la ligne d'Eski-Shehr–Konia, parcours de 445 kilom. qui est dans sa troisième année d'exercice, elle se trouve placée sous un régime spécial. Sur 13,750 fr. déjà accordés, l'Etat en effet ne s'engage à payer comme maximum que 6,750. Grâce à cette garantie réduite elle a pu faire face aux charges de son capital.

Les garanties qui précèdent sur 1,023 kilom. représentent en bloc 11,242,130 fr., soit £ T. 497,139.

Le Gouvernement Impérial, par les revenus cédés à la Compagnie et que la Dette Publique est chargée d'encaisser pour compte de celle-ci, grâce à la protection accordée, la Compagnie a pu trouver dès le début les capitaux nécessaires pour l'exécution de ses engagements et lancer dans les Bourses Européennes ses deux émissions d'actions et obligations, lesquelles ont été couvertes, sauf une grande partie

qu'elle garde en portefeuille afin que dans une entente éventuelle avec la Compagnie d'Aidin, elle les lui offre pour l'échange de ses actions.

La Compagnie depuis sa fondation a payé à ses actionnaires les dividendes suivantes :—

En—	Pour cent.
1889	5
1890	5
1891	4·50
1892	4·50
1893	5
1894	5
1895	6
1896	5
1897	5

Quant à l'année 1898, le bilan n'est pas encore dressé, mais elle espère payer le même dividende.

La Compagnie pour assurer son entreprise et l'amortissement de ses actions, s'est décidée d'inscrire chaque année dans son bilan un grand fonds de réserve qui, jusqu'en 1897 s'élevait à la somme de 10,304,905 fr., soit £ T. 459,950, et depuis 1898, elle a commencé une tirages d'amortir ses actions.

Jusqu'en 1897, les garanties kilométriques ont été très régulièrement payées par la Dette Publique.

Mais depuis 1895, elles ont été diminuées presque de moitié :—

	Fr.	£ T.
1896	5,271,000	= 235,000
1897	5,310,000	= 237,477
1898	2,625,000	= 116,061

Cette réduction remarquable de 1897 doit être attribuée à l'inauguration de la ligne de Konia, ligne qui a apporté de grands profits à la ligne principale d'Angora, et, surtout, à la compétence d'agents commerciaux que la Compagnie a envoyés dans toutes les grandes villes de son parcours avec mission de préparer le terrain commercial et même en cas opportun sur les grandes expéditions, de procurer aux commerçants toutes les facilités possibles en leur faisant une déduction sur le tarif en vigueur.

La Compagnie ne possède que le seul port d'Ismidt, insuffisant pour l'expansion de son trafic par mer. Si, grâce à la haute sollicitude de Sa Majesté Impériale le Sultan, la construction du port de Haïdar-Pasha avait été accordée à temps et que des magasins et entrepôts y fussent élevés, alors, selon une réflection pratique, le Gouvernement Impérial serait aujourd'hui entièrement dégagé de ces garanties.

La Compagnie prenant en considération sa situation financière envers le Gouvernement Impérial, voyant son trafic s'élever de jour en jour, est persuadée que dans peu de temps le Gouvernement Impérial sera dégagé de ses engagements.

La Compagnie se basant sur son passé, sur son droit de préférence et sur la prospérité actuelle de ses lignes en exploitation ; se fondant sur les rapports techniques de ses ingénieurs qui ont fait déjà des études de la prolongation Bagdad sur la richesse, la fertilité qui existent sur ce parcours et, surtout sur les rapports des agents commerciaux qu'elle a envoyés jusqu'ici dans l'intérieur, possédant toutes les facultés possibles pour commencer dès à présent les travaux et pour éviter toute concurrence, s'est décidée de demander la ligne de Bagdad–Bassrah, sans aucune garantie kilométrique.

La Compagnie vient de solliciter Sa Majesté Impériale le Sultan, dans sa haute sollicitude, de vouloir bien prendre en considération les vues suivantes :—

Comme la prolongation en question, avec les embranchements et le matériel roulant (2,200 kilom.) exige un capital de 10,000,000*f.*, la Compagnie, pour pouvoir donner de l'assurance à son groupe, n'aura qu'à lui faire valoir que Sa Majesté Impériale, ayant pleine confiance en elle pour la réalisation une heure plus tôt du projet de Bagdad vient, de sa propre initiative, accorder de nouveau les garanties kilométriques des lignes existantes déjà accordées.

Le montant de ces garanties sera versé à la Banque Impériale Ottomane pendant une période de six ans, délai auquel la Compagnie s'engage à achever la ligne de Bagdad en trois lots d'après les plans présentés.

Après l'achèvement de la ligne, les propres actions et obligations de la Compagnie, celles de Cassaba, ainsi que les capitaux du prolongement en question

seront échangées avec une nouvelle émission d'obligations qui, d'après le calcul fait, ne dépassera pas 20,000,000*l*. C'est alors que, d'un commun accord avec le Gouvernement Impérial et en cas de besoin, les fonds accumulés à la Banque Impériale Ottomane serviront pour assurer à cette nouvelle émission un intérêt de 3 pour cent.

La Compagnie est convaincue que même après l'achèvement de la ligne, le trafic sera suffisant pour dégager le Gouvernement Impérial de ses obligations et que les fonds accumulés à la Banque Impériale Ottomane seront à sa disposition.

Le 6 (18) *Juin*, 1899.

Inclosure 3 in No. 17.

Memorandum.

A LA date des 5 et 6 Mai, les représentants de la Deutsche Banque et du Chemin de Fer d'Anatolie, MM. le Dr. Siemens, A. Gwinner, et E. Huguenin d'une part, de la Banque Impériale Ottomane et du Chemin de Fer de Cassaba, MM. Th. Berger, G. Auboyneau, de Sarty, et la Régie Générale de Chemins de Fer, MM. le Comte Vitali et de Biedermann d'autre part, se sont réunis à Berlin en vue de se mettre d'accord sur une entente à établir tant au point de vue de la meilleure gestion dans l'intérêt commun des lignes d'Anatolie et de Cassaba que d'une entente à fixer pour la continuation des lignes d'Asie-Mineure dans la direction de Bagdad et de Bassrah.

Cette réunion a eu pour résultat de manifester le désir sincère des deux groupes d'unir leurs intérêts dans le présent et de marcher d'accord dans le développement futur.

En vue de préparer un accord prochain entre les Compagnies d'Anatolie et de Cassaba sous la forme d'un échange d'actions, d'une entente d'exploitation ou sous toute autre forme, il a été décidé que dès à présent le groupe du Chemin de Fer d'Anatolie donnerait deux Administrateurs à la Compagnie Cassaba, qui les accepte, et que la Compagnie de Cassaba de son côté fournirait deux Administrateurs à la Compagnie du Chemin de Fer d'Anatolie, qui les accepte également.

La présence réciproque d'Administrateur dans les deux Compagnies a paru aux deux groupes le meilleur moyen de préparer pour un avenir prochain les accords qui ont fait l'objet des présents entretiens et dont le principe a été accepté de part et d'autre avec le désir d'y donner suite le plus promptement possible. Au point de vue de la continuation des lignes de l'Asie-Mineure dans la direction de Bagdad et Bassrah, il a été entendu qu'une participation dont le chiffre a été fixé à 40 pour cent serait réservée dans cette entreprise au groupe de la Banque Impériale Ottomane les 60 pour cent restant, représentant dans une proportion à déterminer la participation de la Deutsche Banque et de son groupe. Dans le cas où il serait reconnu utile de faire une place à d'autres intéressés, cette participation sera prise proportionnellement sur les parts susdites.

Il a été convenu en outre que les parties prenaient l'engagement amiable de se tenir réciproquement informée de toute proposition qui pourrait leur être faite relative à la question intéressant la situation actuelle des chemins de fer en Asie-Mineure.

Ont signé : Dr. SIEMENS.
A. GWINNER.
HUGUENIN.
TH. BERGER.
G. AUBOYNEAU.
R. DE SARTY.
G. VITALI.
BIEDERMANN.

No. 18.

Sir N. O'Conor to the Marquess of Salisbury.—(*Received July* 31.)

(No. 359.)
My Lord, *Therapia, July* 25, 1899.

WITH reference to my despatch No. 343 of the 14th instant, I have the honour to transmit herewith copy of a despatch from Her Majesty's Vice-Consul at Van reporting further with regard to the supposed revolutionary incursion near Bashkala.

At the time of writing, Major Maunsell appears to have been still in considerable doubt whether the alleged incursion really took place or not. He reports the appointment of a Commission by the Vali to inquire into the truth of the story.

In the concluding portion of his despatch Major Maunsell gives a reassuring account of the situation in the Vilayet of Van, where he says there is no reason to believe that an extensive, or, indeed, any revolutionary, movement exists. He pays a high tribute to the Vali's administration, describing him as energetic in the suppression of attempts at pillage on the part of the Kurds, and careful to verify rumours of revolutionary movements before taking action upon them.

I have, &c.
(Signed) N. R. O'CONOR.

Inclosure in No. 18.

Major Maunsell to Sir N. O'Conor.

(No. 29.)
Sir, *Van, July* 9, 1899.

I HAVE the honour to report that on the 2nd July news arrived here that a band of Armenian revolutionists, said to number fifty persons, had crossed the frontier north-east of Bashkala, and had executed an attack on Sheref Bey, the Kurdish Chief, in his tents on the hills there.

Sheref Bey sent information to Government, which arrived in Van from three separate sources, viz., the Mutessarif of Bashkala and the Kaïmakams of Serai and Khoshab, stating that an attack had been made on him by revolutionists, but he had driven them off with a loss of three killed on their part and one on his side.

The Kaïmakam of Khoshab, on receipt of this news, sent out a small party of regular troops and some zaptiehs as far as Zinis, a village two hours east of Khoshab, where they were joined by some Hamidieh Kurds.

These latter stated that they encountered the revolutionists hiding in a certain valley among the hills, and killed one of them, a leader named Bego, before they managed to escape.

Another man was taken prisoner in the clothing of a villager, who stated he had left his arms and other clothing with his comrades, and had pushed on ahead to spy out what opposition they were likely to encounter.

The first news gave circumstantial accounts that three revolutionists were killed in this encounter, and the remainder so surrounded that it was impossible for them to escape.

Zekki Pasha sent instructions to the Commandant here that any troops that the Vali thought necessary should be sent to assist, and also that special precautions should be taken not to molest innocent villagers.

The Vali dispatched orders to similar effect to the Kaïmakam of Khoshab.

Finding that the above stories had their origin in information derived from Sheref Bey, at first the Vali was inclined to disbelieve the whole story.

He might have sent out troops on the evening of the day he received information, but waited until the next morning before dispatching the men from Van.

A squadron of cavalry and a company of infantry were sent from here, and the first act of the Major in command was to dispense with the assistance of a number of Hamidieh Kurds who had collected.

Special staff officers were sent from here to report, but they could find no trace of revolutionists at the place where they were said to be surrounded.

The Kurds said they had been seen making their escape in the direction of Serai, returning to Persia.

Shortly after the troops returned to Van, having discovered no trace of revolutionists.

The prisoner, who was taken to Bashkala, is a man who has been employed at Etchmiadzin, and states he joined a band of sixteen other revolutionists at Salmas, and started with a view of going to Bitlis to join Sirop's party. Five came direct from Russia, and the remainder from Salmas.

As a guide they obtained a certain Hazo, a renegade Armenian, who had turned Moslem, had been a servant of Sheref Bey, had fled into Persia, and had again become Christian.

This man seems to have led them past Sheref Bey's camp, whose men raised the alarm, and turned out in force, but no fighting took place, as the revolutionists immediately fled.

The general opinion here some days after the event, and which I believe to be true, is that the whole affair was an elaborate plot on the part of Sheref Bey to gain credit with the Government.

It will be remembered that last year, after a similar attack on him, he was decorated and specially rewarded by the Sultan.

Fresh orders have now arrived that Sheref Bey is to be imprisoned and tried, and to escape this he, doubtless, arranged the plot.

It is most important that he should gain no credit for these events.

Zekki Pasha has also taken the subject up, and apparently believes implicitly in Sheref Bey's stories.

He complains strongly against the Vali, who, he says, was dilatory in dispatching troops, thus permitting the revolutionists to make good their escape.

The Vali was in no way to blame for the short delay which occurred while he was endeavouring to verify the various rumours.

The Vali has appointed a Commission of four members to thoroughly inquire into the above stories, and see if the revolutionists really came or not, or whether the Kurds suffered as stated.

The members will be :—

1. Husni Pasha, the Military Commandant of Van, who may be said to be Zekki Pasha's representative in Van.

He has already obtained leave from the Mushir; and, although under his orders, is not particularly partial to the Hamidieh Cavalry.

2. The Public Prosecutor ("Mudai Umumi") of Van, Hamdi Bey, a capable and very energetic official, who is strongly hostile to Sheref Bey, knows all the Kurd Chiefs along the frontier intimately, and may be expected to give an impartial report. He has been working hard hitherto to have Sheref Bey brought in here and imprisoned, and has incurred Zekki Pasha's displeasure in consequence.

3. The Muavin of Van.

4. The Ali Bey or Chief of Police of Van.

Permission is still awaited from the Ministry of Justice for the Public Prosecutor to join the Commission.

The Mutessarif of Bashkala continues to send in alarmist reports of revolutionary movements to the Vali and also to the Sublime Porte.

The Vali treats them all as false until more complete verification can be obtained, and there is no reason to believe that any extensive, or, indeed, any revolutionary movement, exists at all.

The Vali is always most careful in verifying rumours before acting on them, which is a most necessary precaution, as if too readily believed, and troops set in motion in all directions the whole country would quickly be disturbed, and the Kurds would find a ready excuse to start pillaging Christian villages on pretence of searching for revolutionists.

The Vali is, I submit, greatly to be commended for the tact with which he has dealt with many rumours which have been pressed upon him, all of which have turned out to be false; and owing to his action the country remains perfectly quiet, and any attempts at pillage on the part of the Kurds are at once suppressed.

As he told me, even if it were true that this band of seventeen men were near Khoshab, that is no reason why I should set half the garrison of Van in motion after them. With our frontier posts as at present, with zaptiehs and perhaps some regular cavalry such small bands can easily be looked after without disturbing the country-side. I agreed with him.

The idea that a large force numbering several thousands, and requiring a number of troops to deal with them, would arrive, is not to be entertained.

When the news of the affair at Khoshab arrived here, very little excitement was caused either among Armenians or Moslems.

As a rule the Armenians were annoyed at the prospect of a new period of disturbance, as their chief wish now is to be permitted to improve and carry on trading operations, the prospects of which have greatly improved of late.

Several Armenians who fled for political reasons at the time of the massacres, have been recently permitted by the Vali to return, and, although under a general police supervision, have resumed their former avocations, and are quite contented.

The general Turkish idea was that if the revolutionists came at all, it was not the fault of the local Armenians, but of the Russian Government who permitted these bands to leave the Caucasus or who specially connived at their coming in order to foment disturbance in this country. This view I heard from several sources.

I have, &c.
(Signed) F. R. MAUNSELL.

No. 19.

Sir N. O'Conor to the Marquess of Salisbury.—(Received August 7.)

(No. 376.)
My Lord, *Therapia, August 2, 1899.*

I HAVE the honour to transmit herewith copy of a despatch from Her Majesty's Vice-Consul at Van reporting on the condition of the population of the district of Khizan and Ispairt, in the Vilayet of Bitlis, which Major Maunsell has recently visited in order to distribute relief.

I have, &c.
(Signed) N. R. O'CONOR.

Inclosure in No. 19.

Major Maunsell to Sir N. O'Conor.

(No. 32.)
Sir, *Van, July 17, 1899.*

I HAVE the honour to forward the following report regarding my recent visit to the districts of Khizan and Ispairt, east of Bitlis.

On leaving the Van Vilayet I passed down the Ghitzan Dere to Karasy, the seat of the Kaimakam of the Khizan Caza.

In the Van Vilayet I traversed part of the Karchikan Caza, visited the large Armenian village of Pelo and other smaller villages farther down the valley, with a view to distributing relief.

They were suffering a good deal from the prevailing scarcity, but I had already ordered wheat to be sent from Van, and it was then on its way.

At Chavrak, at the mouth of the Ghitzan Dere, lives Mussa Bey, an important Kurdish "Derebey," or local Chieftain, of this district, now absent on a visit to Constantinople.

Before the massacres he was passably rich, but the destruction of many of the most industrious portion of the population involved Musa Bey also in ruin, a fact which he is not slow now to recognize.

I have heard from other quarters, also, that the Kurds say that they had definite instructions to massacre from the Government; it was not their own doing, and they repent of it now.

Many Kurds and Armenians of this region emigrate to seek work for a certain period on steamers at the Sulina mouth of the Danube.

The villages in this valley, especially Saris, are famous for their production of all kinds of fruit.

Midway down the valley is the Chemkhane Tekke, a Kurdish religious centre, the residence of Sheikh Seyyid Ali, one of several similar shrines in this part of Kurdistan. On a neighbouring crag overlooking the valley are the ruins of Sinbau Kale, where a former Derebey used to reside.

The Sheikh was not present, but his representative, in a conversation apart, explained a number of grievances against Turkish rule, and against the exactions of minor officials

in particular, and he wished again for the days when they could be ruled by their own Derebeys.

These Tekkes may be taken as the centres of the Kurdish national spirit which is by no means extinct, or merged in Osmanli tradition.

There are no villages down the valley until Karasu is reached; and single travellers usually avoid this section of the route.

This may be due to the large Kurdish village of Khoros (250 houses) in a side valley to the west, a nest of notorious robbers.

The whole Caza of Khizan depends largely on its fruit harvest, and the district seems specially favourable for growing vines. Wheat, rice, cotton, rye, and millet are also produced, manure being used in the fields; a distinction between this and the country farther north, where nothing but animal fuel is obtainable, while here the country is fairly well-wooded and abundant fuel is obtainable.

Last year the fruit harvest was a failure, which occasioned a great deal of privation in both Kurd and Armenian villages.

The Armenian population had, however, rather spoilt their case with the Government by greatly exaggerating it.

The Kaimakam of Khizan was absent when I reached Karasu, but hearing of my expected arrival the Vali caused him to return, bringing with him a copy of the "Bitlis Gazette" (attached herewith), in which the Khizan Armenians had stated that during the winter over 100 persons had died of starvation.

The Vali asked me through the Kaimakam, to make all possible inquiries and see if there was any truth in these reports.

I subsequently inquired in various villages and could trace no deaths at all due to starvation.

From Khizan I crossed into Ispairt (Armenian Spargird), situated in a long deep valley of a stream joining the main river, the Ghindir, a tributary of the Bohtan.

Only the upper part of this valley contains Armenian villages (twenty-five Armenian) among others of Kurds (twenty Kurds) while lower is the exclusively Kurdish district of Mazara.

Among the Kurds are several small Derebeys, and the feeling now between Kurds and Armenians is friendly. Seed for spring sowing and oxen had been lent at the usual rates of interest by the Kurds to the Armenians, and in one village I was told they had been saved from starvation during the winter by bread given by a Kurd Derebey close by.

I am glad to say the prospects of the fruit harvest there are very good this year.

Some of the more isolated villages I visited I found in need of food relief to last them until the new harvest could be gathered.

From Ispairt I passed into Dur-i-Merwan (Armenian Shinitsor), a similar valley to Ispairt but farther north, and containing a number of Armenian villages among the Kurds.

I visited several villages here and finally the monastery of Surphatch, returning to Karasu.

Between the local Kurds and Armenians the feeling is friendly, but north-east of Dur-i-Merwan is the lofty range of Av-i-Berkhan, occupied in summer by many nomad tribes, chiefly of the Dudiri and Alikanli, who make petty raids into these valleys.

The Government has now established a guard-house on a high col of the Av-i-Berkhan on a summer route from Van to Der-i-Merwan, and this has had a good effect on the nomads.

A short way south of Karasu is the Khizan Plain, with ruins of old town of that name, in which is situated another celebrated Kurdish shrine, Ghaida Tekke, where I met Sheikh Seyyid Ali, a son of the celebrated Sheikh Jellaladin, a young man of about 25, who is treated with almost superstitious reverence by the Kurds; and persons approaching within half-a-mile of the shrine are supposed to dismount and walk. He does not devote himself to any serious occupation or try to improve the great influence which he has naturally over these Kurds as son of Sheikh Jellaladin.

He is not, I think, wanting in intelligence should he care to exercise it.

There is another older man, Sheikh Muhammad Rashid, a brother of Sheikh Jellaladin, who probably would be more energetic, but the Government support the claims of Seyyid Ali.

This Tekke is at the junction of several local tracks, and, as is the usual custom at these places, 200 travellers passing by are said to be fed daily.

I traversed the usual route from Karasu to Bitlis, passing through Dadig, a small

valley with five Armenian villages, which I found in a great state of poverty, and to which relief was subsequently sent from Bitlis.

For the relief of Khizan and Ispairt, I made arrangments for wheat to be obtained in Van, and sent over the hills from the lake shore, that being the shortest route.

I have, &c.

(Signed) F. R. MAUNSELL.

No. 20.

Sir N. O'Conor to the Marquess of Salisbury.—(*Received August 8.*)

(No. 112. Commercial.)

My Lord, *Constantinople, August 1, 1899.*

I HAVE the honour to lay before your Lordship the following account of the fortunes of the Haifa Railway, which, I trust, will serve to explain the present position of affairs with regard to it:—

The Concession for the Haifa-Damascus Railway was originally obtained by Shukri Bey, of the Ministry of Public Instruction, and Yussuf Elias Effendi, Chief Engineer of the Vilayet of Syria, but, owing to their inability to find the necessary capital, nothing was done.

Mr. Pilling's interest in the scheme dates from 1890, when, after negotiating with Yussuf Elias Effendi, it was decided that the latter was to buy out Shukri Bey, and that Pilling should then acquire Elias' whole interest in the Concession, on the understanding that every assistance should be given by Shukri and Elias in having the Concession transferred to Mr. Pilling.

The necessary preliminary arrangements having been satisfactorily settled with the then Minister of Public Works, Fewzik Pasha (1891), an official application was filed. Pilling stated that he had formed a Company in London, under the name of the "Syrian Ottoman Railway Company," with a capital of 600,000*l.*

The Firman of Concession was granted on the 30th September, 1891, and the caution money of 10,000*l.* was duly deposited at the Imperial Ottoman Bank, in accordance with the conditions of the Convention. The construction of the railway was, according to the conditions stated in Article IV of the Convention, to be completed within four years from the date of the Firman.

In March 1892 Mr. Pilling informed the authorities that the work of construction would be commenced in three months' time, but in fact the first sod was only broken in December of that year.

The work was undertaken by Messrs. Pauling, but, owing to lack of funds and differences on the Board of Management, the work was suspended after 8 kilom. of line had been built.

From 1894 to the end of June 1895 nothing was done, and Mr. Pilling, fearing that the authorities would probably confiscate the caution money, as well as withdraw the Concession, came to Constantinople in order to negotiate.

The reasons he advanced for the non-fulfilment of the stipulations of the Convention were favourably considered by the Government, and his application for a three years' extension of time was granted. Mr. Pilling was also successful in making arrangements with Mahmud Djellal-ed-din Pasha, the Minister of Public Works, by whom he was authorized to withdraw the caution money deposited at the Ottoman Bank.

Notwithstanding the time gained by the extension to 1898, Mr. Pilling was still unable to resume the work at Haifa either in 1896 or 1897, and he again came to Constantinople in September 1898, *i.e.*, a month before the expiration of the extension of time granted in 1895.

In a letter which he addressed to the Minister, dated the 6th October, 1898, of which a copy is inclosed, he explained that his inability to fulfil his engagements in the past had been mainly due to the fact that a kilometric guarantee, which he had twice applied for—in 1895 and again in 1897—had not been granted to his line, and that consequently his efforts to raise capital had been fruitless. He was able, however, to inform the Minister that, notwithstanding this drawback, he had at last succeeded in finding the necessary funds for building the first portion of the line, *i.e.*, from St. Jean d'Acre to the River Jordan.

He therefore declared his readiness to proceed with the building of this first section according to the plans already approved of within a period of two years from the date of

the Minister's reply sanctioning the construction, and also to abandon all his rights to the periods of option mentioned in the Convention at the end of the two years now demanded.

He suggested that he should not be compelled to continue the line on to Damascus until the receipts of the first section amounted to the annual sum of 10,000 fr. per kilom.

He, however, reserved the right to construct the railway to Damascus before the gross receipts of the line opened to traffic amounted to the sum mentioned, and further demanded that his Company should enjoy all the rights and privileges conferred by the Convention.

After proposing certain modifications in the Statutes of the Company, Mr. Pilling declared that should the conditions be demanded, and which were necessary to the fulfilment of his engagements, be accepted by the Government, his Company undertook to deposit the sum of 10,000*l.* with the Ottoman Bank as caution money two months after the date of the Minister's favourable reply to his communication. Should his Company fail, however, to deposit that sum within the stipulated time, the Company would acknowledge having forfeited all their rights to the Concession.

The reply of the Minister, of which copy is inclosed, is dated the 7th October, 1898. It states that, due consideration having been given to the requests made by Mr. Pilling, the Ministry of Public Works had decided to grant the demands made on condition that the caution money was duly deposited within the given time.

This official document was not given to Mr. Pilling, but was handed over to the Ottoman Bank, with instructions that it was to be given him in the event of his paying 10,000*l.* into the bank as well as a separate sum of 1,000*l.*

These two amounts were paid in London to the Ottoman Bank on the 10th December, 1898, and the Ministry having been informed, the necessary instructions were at once transmitted to the authorities at Haifa to permit Mr. Pilling, or his agents, to resume the construction of the railway.

Mahmud Djellal-ed-din Pasha died shortly afterwards, and his successor Zihni Pasha, refused to recognise the validity of Mr. Pilling's claims, and has maintained that his predecessor's action in granting a new extension of time is irregular.

Zihni Pasha contends that the railway should, according to the Convention, have been completed in 1895, but that only 5 kilom. had been built during that time. The Government, however, had accepted Mr. Pilling's explanations, and had, at his request, granted him three years more in which to carry out his engagements. The term of three years having expired in 1898, and the railway not having been constructed, Mr. Pilling had inevitably forfeited all rights to the Concession.

Mr. Pilling had in the meantime formed a Syndicate, with Mr. Hills, of the Thames Ironworks, as one of the principals, and the Syndicate have maintained their rights, basing themselves on the official document obtained from the former Minister of Public Works. The situation was not, however, considered satisfactory, and a ratification of the modifications granted by the Ministerial letter of the 7th October, 1898, as well as a full recognition of the validity of the Concession, was considered necessary before any extensive operations could be carried on with the railway. Mr. Harvey, one of the members of the new Syndicate, visited Constantinople in the early part of the present year and attempted to bring about a satisfactory arrangement.

Whilst apparently favourably inclined to grant the Concession to Mr. Hills, Zihni Pasha maintains that the Convention of the old Concession must be modified. The changes which the Ministry considers it necessary to make in the Convention have been informally discussed during the last three months by Mr. Hills' legal representative, Mr. Pears, and several members of the Technical Department of the Ministry. It is understood that all the points raised have been arranged in a satisfactory manner, but the Minister has declined to proceed with the matter on his own responsibility, and has consequently referred the whole question to the Sublime Porte, with a Report, rather favourable than otherwise, and has asked to be authorized to treat with Mr. Hills' agent. The Porte, in its turn not wishing, apparently, to assume any responsibility, has submitted all the circumstances to the consideration of His Majesty the Sultan, whose decision in the matter is now awaited.

The numerous delays in obtaining a satisfactory arrangement prompted Mr. Hill to intimate, through his agent Mr. Pears, that, failing a solution of the question by the end of July, he intended abandoning the enterprise and would recall his engineers from Haifa.

The advice given, however, to Mr. Pears by officials connected with the Ministry has not been discouraging, and he has received hints from them advising him to continue actively the work of constructing the railway, notwithstanding the informality of his position.

The uncertainty and hesitation characterizing the proceedings of the new Company are, however, well understood on the spot, and produce the worst effect. Without attempting to throw blame on any particular person connected with the construction of the line, the fact remains that a constant state of friction has existed between the Turkish Commissaire attached to the works at Haifa and the Company's engineers.

This state of things is very undesirable. If the Company intend to prosecute the work, it is obviously in their interest to inspire confidence in the minds of the Turkish officials by an efficient management, and by avoiding delays in the arrival of railway material, which cannot fail to be interpreted as a symptom of uncertainty and hesitation.

At Constantinople there have been the usual delays in obtaining the modifications asked for, and the negotiations have been unduly protracted from month to month, although Mr. Pears seems to think that in reality the Ottoman Government is not unfavourably disposed to an understanding.

Notwithstanding the goodwill shown by Zihni Pasha the papers are retained in the Palace, and up to the present moment there is no assurance that the Imperial Iradé sanctioning the modifications will be shortly issued.

It is, however, open to Mr. Hills to proceed with the work of construction if he wishes.

By the appointment of a Turkish Commissaire the Ottoman Government have virtually admitted his right to do so, and if he places the Turks in face of a *fait accompli* it is difficult to suppose that they will not accept it. The very fact that the works are not stopped will be *prima facie* evidence of the Government assent.

A somewhat similar state of things exists on the Ada Bazar branch line connecting the Anatolian Railway with the village of the same name. The official recognition has not yet been obtained, and the Iradé is delayed at the Palace; but instead of stopping the works on this account, the Germans are pressing them on with all speed, confident that their position will be ultimately regularized.

Her Majesty's Embassy is not called upon directly to advise the English Company how to proceed, but they may properly call the Company's attention to the course adopted under very similar circumstances by the Germans.

No doubt the collapse of the Haifa Railway enterprise would be a blow to future enterprise in Syria or in other parts of Turkey, but the way in which this Concession has been hitherto conducted is not calculated to advance the prestige and influence of Great Britain in these parts.

I have on different occasions supported the representations of Mr. Pears both at the Palace and the Sublime Porte, and I shall gladly continue to do so if convinced that the undertaking is seriously supported by a gentleman of the business capacity and financial standing of Mr. Hills, and that it is intended to carry it through.

I have, &c.

(Signed) N. R. O'CONOR.

Inclosure 1 in No. 20.

Mr. Pilling to Mahmud Pasha.

Constantinople, le 6 Octobre, 1898.

Excellence,

J'AI l'honneur de porter à la connaissance de votre Excellence que depuis plusieurs années je travaille sérieusement à trouver le capital nécessaire pour la construction du chemin de fer de Saint-Jean d'Acre à Damas, dont j'ai la Concession. votre Excellence sait bien toutes les difficultés que j'ai rencontré dans cette tâche et ce qui la rendrait plus ingrate et plus pénible c'est que la ligne projetée était dépourvue de garantie kilométrique. Pour remédier à cela j'ai présenté dans le courant de l'année 1895 une demande au Gouvernement Impérial Ottoman pour obtenir la garantie kilométrique. Malheureusement ma demande fût rejetée mais constatant la continuation de mes efforts et de mes peines, pendant cette intervalle le Gouvernement Impérial daigna m'accorder trois années de prolongation pour la construction de la ligne. Je reviens en Angleterre où je n'ai négligé aucun moyen, je ne me suis épargné aucune peine pour réunir les fonds nécessaires. Cette fois encore je me suis heurté à des refus, toujours pour la même raison, la garantie kilométrique; j'ai voulu alors faire une dernière tentative auprès du Gouvernement Impérial et je suis revenu

à Constantinople en 1897 demander une fois encore la garantie kilométrique, et à mon grand regret ma demande ne fut pas acceptée, mais j'étais résolu à tenir mes engagements et malgré ce nouveau refus. Malgré la crise financière qui existait en Europe j'ai pris le chemin de l'Angleterre et je me suis mis en devoir de faire de nouvelles tentatives pour trouver le capital, et malgré les difficultés de toutes sortes qui se dressaient devant moi j'ai été assez favorisé pour trouver les fonds nécessaires pour la construction de la moitié de la ligne environ, c'est-à-dire, depuis Saint-Jean d'Acre et Haifa jusqu'à la Rivière de Jourdain, je m'engage donc maintenant de construire cette première partie suivant la Convention et les plans déjà approuvés par le Gouvernement Impérial Ottoman dans l'espace de deux années à partir de la réponse de votre Excellence à cette lettre, tous les délais facultatifs prévus par la Convention devant prendre fin à l'expiration de ces deux années.

Cette partie de la ligne une fois achevée et livrée à l'exploitation, j'espère que sa recette kilométrique brute atteindra 10,000 fr. par an, et alors je me mettrai d'accord avec le Gouvernement Impérial Ottoman pour la construction du reste de la ligne jusqu'à Damas, me réservant d'ailleurs la faculté de continuer la ligne jusqu'à Damas avant que la recette de la première partie ci-haut mentionnée n'ait atteint 10,000 fr. Cependant, il est bien entendu que l'objet de la Compagnie tel qu'il est exposé dans l'Article 1° des Statuts, comprendra l'exécution et l'exploitation de tous les droits et privilèges accordés par la Concession.

L'Article 6 des Statuts subira l'addition suivante:—

Le capital de 600,000*l.* peut être divisé en actions de différentes classes, soit avec ou sans priorité quant au capital, dividende, faculté de vote ou autrement tel que le Conseil d'Administration peut le déterminer de temps en temps, et il pourra être réparti de la manière suivante:

Un tiers au moins du capital pour la section Acre–Jourdain, un autre tiers pour la section Jourdain–Nava et le reste du capital pour la section Nava–Damas.

La Compagnie a n'importe quel moment ou de temps en temps aura la faculté d'racepareer dans le but d'extinction et à la valeur nominale toutes les actions privilégiées qui pourraient alors exister sur la ligne ou sur une partie de la ligne.

De même l'Article 7 des Statuts de la Compagnie sera rédigé de la manière suivante:—

La Compagnie, ayant émis au moins le dit tiers de son capital pour la section Acre–Jourdain, est définitivement constituée.

La Compagnie est autorisée d'émettre le restant du capital conformément à l'Article précédent à telles époques et par telles sommes que le Conseil d'Administration pourra fixer.

L'Article 25 des Statuts sera rédigé ainsi:—

"Tout actionnaire n'aura qu'une voix pour chaque action qu'il porte."

J'ose espérer, Excellence, que ces propositions seront acceptées, car elles faciliteront l'exécution des engagements que je viens de prendre. De mon côté, pour assurer leur exécution je m'engage à déposer à la Banque Impériale Ottomane dans le délai de deux mois à partir de la date de la première réponse de votre Excellence à ma présente lettre, la somme de £ T. 10,000 à titre de cautionnement. Et si dans le délai de deux mois la Compagnie n'effectue pas le dépôt, elle sera déchue sans mise en demeure préalable de tous les droits à la Concession.

J'ai, &c.
(Signé) J. R. PILLING.

Certifié conforme à l'original:
(Signé) OR. KARDIALY.

Inclosure 2 in No. 20.

Mahmoud Pasha to Mr. Pilling.

Constantinople, le 25 September (7 Octobre), 1898 (N. S.).

M. Pilling, Président de la Société de Chemin de Fer Ottoman de Syrie.

J'AI déféré au Conseiller Légiste de mon Ministère votre lettre en date du 6 Octobre, 1898, relative aux démarches faites par vous pour assurer la construction de la ligne de Saint-Jean d'Acre–Damas, concédée à votre Société et dont les travaux avaient été suspendus depuis quelque temps. Vous y émettez certaines considérations

et demandes. J'ai également déféré au Conseiller Légiste la lettre que son Excellence l'Ambassadeur Ottoman à Londres a adressée à mon Ministère pour l'informer qu'un capital de £ T. 1,500,000 a été assuré pour la dite entreprise.

Or, j'ai l'honneur de vous faire connaître, sur un avis du Conseil légal de mon Ministère, que la ligne sera construite tout d'abord de Saint-Jean d'Acre à Haifa et au fleuve de Jourdain, et cela dans le délai de deux ans; que tous les délais facultatifs déterminés dans la Convention seront assujettis à l'expiration du dit délai de construction; lorsque cette première section sera ouverte, et que les recettes brutes kilométriques atteindront le chiffre que vous indiquez, on continuera la construction de la seconde section suivant une entente qui interviendra entre mon Ministère et votre Société.

Vos engagements et déclarations comme quoi la Société sera déchue de tous les droits à la Concession sans aucune mise en demeure, dans le cas où elle ne déposerait pas à la Banque Impériale Ottomane dans un délai de deux mois à partir de la date de la présente lettre responsive, un cautionnement de £ T. 10,000 pour assurer l'exécution de cette entreprise, comportant des dispositions propres à assurer la construction de la dite ligne plus tôt; étant donné l'importance commerciale de cette ligne en Syrie, mon Ministère juge que les nouveaux engagements impliquent des mesures qui sont complètement de nature à sauvegarder le principe de la Concession accordée précédemment par Firman Impérial, et à assurer l'exécution prompte des travaux. Quant aux matières traitées dans votre lettre en ce qui concerne les Statuts de votre Société, le Conseiller Légiste de mon Ministère les trouve conformes aux principes régissant les Sociétés Anonymes.

Par conséquent, le contenu de votre lettre précitée a été approuvé par mon Ministère.

Je vous avise donc que dans le cas où une déclaration officielle émanant de la Banque Impériale Ottomane ne serait pas remise à mon Ministère dans le délai convenu pour nous informer du dépôt du cautionnement de £ T. 10,000, conformément à votre nouvel engagement, les propositions approuvées par la présente lettre seront considérées comme nulles et non avenues et votre Société sera dans ce cas déchue entièrement et définitivement de tous ses droits à la Concession.

Je saisis, &c.
Le Ministre,
(Signé) MAHMOUD.

No. 21.

Sir N. O'Conor to the Marquess of Salisbury.—(Received August 14.)

(No. 388.)
My Lord,

Therapia, August 5, 1899.

I HAVE the honour to transmit to your Lordship herewith copy of a despatch which I have received from Her Majesty's Consul-General at Bagdad on the subject of the alleged migration of the Aniza tribe of Bedouins to the Nejd.

This despatch was written in reply to my request for Major Melvill's observations on the report from Her Majesty's Consul at Aleppo forwarded to your Lordship in my despatch No. 190 of the 19th April.

I am to-day forwarding a copy of Major Melvill's despatch to M. Falangu* for his information.

I have, &c.
(Signed) N. R. O'CONOR.

Inclosure in No. 21.

Major Melvill to Sir N. O'Conor.

Bagdad, July 13, 1899.

Sir,

I HAVE the honour to acknowledge receipt of your Excellency's despatch, dated the 20th April last, inclosing a despatch from Her Majesty's Consul at Aleppo concerning the alleged migration of the Aniza Bedouins from that province to Nejd.

2. I have had inquiries made quietly from Fahid Beg, the Sheikh of the Amarat

* Acting Consul at Aleppo.

section of the Aniza tribe, who would certainly know if there were any foundation for the report, and who says that it is impossible that these Bedouins would think of going to Nejd and placing themselves under the protection of Ibn Rashid, seeing that they are enemies of that Chief. Fahid Beg added that it is not unlikely that the Bedouins in question may be coming towards Nejef, as in the past they have come from time to time to that part of the country to raid.

I have, &c.
(Signed) P. J. MELVILL, *Major*,
Acting British Consul-General, Bagdad.

No. 22.

Sir N. O'Conor to the Marquess of Salisbury.—(*Received August* 21.)

(No. 392. Confidential.)
My Lord, *Therapia, August* 8, 1899.

I HAVE the honour to report that the Russian Ambassador called upon me after the Selamlik on Friday, and informed me that he had spoken very strongly to the Sultan about the incursions of Kurds across the Russian frontier. This raiding by semi-military Kurdish bands, he said, was lately of frequent occurrence, and a few weeks ago a band, 300 strong, had crossed the frontier, and shot two of the Russian soldiers by whom they were opposed. He had warned the Sultan that unless effective steps were adopted to stop these proceedings, his Government would be obliged to take their own measures, as they could not tolerate such lawlessness on their frontier.

M. Zinoviell spoke of the Kurdish Hamidieh Regiments as little better than semi-disciplined bandits, whose military organization was a mockery instead of a protection to the country.

I said that I hoped his representations would be successful, as Her Majesty's Embassy had had frequent occasion to complain of both the Kurds and Hamidieh Regiments, on account of their depredations and ill-treatment of the Armenians.

I learn that the Ambassador followed up his representations to the Sultan by a note to the Sublime Porte, stating that if the Ottoman Government allowed any further incursions he would conclude that they were unable to prevent them and, in this case, the Russian Government would be compelled to interfere. His Excellency, told the Minister for Foreign Affairs, that they would be obliged to treat the Kurds as they had treated the Khanates of Khiva and Bokhara, and that they would also send two men-of-war to Trebizond.

The Sublime Porte replied to the Russian note to the effect that a Special Military Commission will be appointed to inquire into the Ambassador's complaints, and to take all necessary steps to prevent a repetition of similar occurrences. At the same time, they drew his Excellency's attention to the fact that the Turkish Government have also grounds of complaint, inasmuch as several revolutionary bands have crossed the Turkish frontier from Russia and caused serious disturbances.

The language of the Russian Ambassador has, I hear, considerably alarmed the Sultan, and I understand that in official circles the Ambassador's threats are taken to indicate the possibility of grave complications in the near future.

I took advantage of the impression made by M. Zinovieff's representations to point out to the Grand Vizier that if the Government allowed the Vali of Diarbekir and other officials, of whose conduct I had had to complain, to create a feeling of general insecurity among the Armenians, the inevitable consequences would be that sooner or later, in order to escape from the systematic ill-treatment of the Turkish officials, the Armenians would gradually embrace the Orthodox religion and put themselves under the protection of the Russian Government, who would then be in a position to afford them the support and protection they had already extended under similar circumstances to other inhabitants of the Ottoman Empire.

The Grand Vizier said that he fully realized this danger, but, by a shrug of his shoulders, gave me to understand that the matter was in the hands of the Sultan.

I have, &c.
(Signed) N. R. O'CONOR.

No. 23.

Sir N. O'Conor to the Marquess of Salisbury.—(*Received August* 21.)

(No. 399.)
My Lord, *Constantinople, August* 10, 1899.

I HAVE the honour to transmit to your Lordship herewith copy of a despatch which I have received from the Acting British Consul at Erzeroum, giving an account of the topographical work in which he has been engaged in the northern part of the vilayet.

I have, &c.
(Signed) N. R. O'CONOR.

Inclosure in No. 23.

Colonel Massy to Sir N. O'Conor.

(No. 33.)
Sir, *Erzeroum, July* 25, 1899.

I HAVE the honour to furnish the following preliminary Report on topographical surveys with which I am engaged, at present, to the north of Erzeroum, begging that your Excellency may be so good as to cause a copy thereof to be transmitted to the Director-General of Military Intelligence.

My object is, by degrees, throughout this summer, as I find time and opportunity, to complete the topography of all the region between Erzeroum, Bibourt, Ispir, Keskin, the Russian frontier south to Olti, and thence, viâ Hassan Kaleh, back to Erzeroum; in fact, the whole region to the north of that fortress, which affords especial interest in its examination as to the possibility of the Erzeroum defences being turned by military movements across it.

For this reason the chief interest lies in the roads from the frontier leading west, and a consideration of their practicability for military purposes in such a turning movement.

I have already entered into the question of the possibility of turning those defences by the south, showing in my despatch No. 29 of the 20th June that such a manœuvre is quite feasible. In that direction there remains some interesting work to be done in exploring the roads over the mountains from the country west of the Ilingeul, near Kiglir, to Erzinjian, the head-quarters of the 4th Army Corps. This is a useful reconnaissance in order to establish the possibility, or otherwise, of a further turning movement to the west, on Erzinjian Plain, while avoiding the Erzeroum defences. I shall endeavour to visit this region before the end of the summer with the above object in view.

The reconnaissance upon which I am at present engaged is a most interesting one. I do not pretend to be working in a totally unexplored country, my military predecessors having already done valuable work in some parts of it. Yet it is a region the topography of which is so little known, as may be judged by an inspection of even our most recent maps, that a few weeks' work across it should add valuable information to our geographical knowledge of this part of the Turco-Trans-Caucasian frontier. It struck me, also, that it has been more neglected than other parts of this country, owing to the fact that no main lines of communication cross or approach it, thus giving no pretext to Europeans to visit it. Its great interest is, nevertheless, undeniable, being the district around the high mountain group in which the Euphrates River takes its source, and whence it flows, in its long course, to the Persian Gulf. Above all it is interesting to us, as I have before said, as a region sure to play an important part in any future military operations between Russia and Turkey, as indeed was the case, in the last war, in those tracts from Hassan Kaleh, over the Kurgha Bazar Mountains, to the north-west, into the Erzeroum Valley.

In order to do as much work as possible at little expense, and without attracting attention, and as it is the habit of everyone, including all officials, to move out of Erzeroum at this hot season, I have established my camp in Tortoum Valley, whence I can easily visit Erzeroum when necessary, and move about on reconnoitring duties in all directions in my leisure moments. I propose only to charge my expenses actually incurred on reconnaissance duties and not my expenditure, while engaged in Erzeroum, or at my head-quarter camp between trips.

I have just completed some useful surveys, visiting all the country on the Doumlon and the Giaour Mountains, around the source of the Euphrates River, and making reconnaissances of all roads in that neighbourhood. I also traversed the country to the watershed which separates the valleys, with their water-courses flowing east, into Trans-Caucasia, from those valleys, with their water-courses, flowing west, and which fall, for the most part, into the Euphrates River towards Erzinjian.

I intend now to traverse, by degrees, the following country and routes, making complete reconnaissances and topographical sketches of all roads practicable for wheeled traffic, thereby establishing the fact, or otherwise, that troops can pass from the Russian frontier, westwards, across these districts.

List of routes and districts to be examined:—

1. Erzeroum to Tortoum, Kaleh.
2. ,, Nairman, Olti.
3. ,, Hussan Kaleh, Kara Urgan, Kars.
4. ,, Hussan Kaleh, Nairman, Olti.
5. ,, Ak Dagh, Euphrates source, Azort.
6. Hussan Kale to Tortoum Kaleh, viâ Bar and Shipek.
7. Tortoum Kaleh to Olti by Sivri Chai.
8. ,, ,, Olti and Nairman by Chiflik, Akar, and Id.
9. ,, ,, Ispir, Koskim, and Russian frontier by the Tehoruk Sou (river).
10. ,, ,, Euphrates source and Doumlon Mountain viâ Zimavor.
11. ,, ,, Ovajik Valley viâ Zimavor.
12. Ispir to Baibourt.
13. Tehoruk Sou Valley, west, towards the Erzeroum–Baibourt road.
14. The Ovajik Valley.
15. Doumlon Mountain to Ovajik Valley.
16. ,, ,, Gun Garmez village, east.
17. ,, ,, Gira Guzek village, east.
18. ,, ,, Ak Dagh village, south.
19. ,, ,, Tsirdalsor village, west.
20. ,, ,, Ortounzi, west.
21. ,, ,, Ispir, north.
22. Erzeroum to Kenshk, near Rabut fort, thence to Bar and Olti by the Karagedi.
23. ,, Kenshk and Hussan Kaleh.
24. ,, Kenshk viâ Hinsk and a pass taking Tafta fort in reverse (south).
25. The main Erzeroum, Hussan Kaleh, Bayazid road, along the Russian frontier, and routes leading north therefrom to Trans-Caucasia.
26. Routes leading south from this main route and the Trans-Caucasian frontier towards Van, Melasgird, Khunus, &c.
27. Routes west of Bingeul towards the north-west on the Erzinjian Plain.

This list appears to be a formidable one and may, at first sight, impress your Excellency as a reconnaissance scheme involving much expense and time. But as most of these routes are concentrated in two districts and as several of them can generally be combined in one trip I can guarantee that the expenses will not be heavy, and that I shall have time to complete the whole work before winter sets in, while the completion of the reconnaissance of these parts should be of considerable eventual value, especially as I propose following routes which are said to be passable for wheeled traffic and accepting no hearsay evidence on this subject in my final reports upon them.

As I have said in previous despatches, it is impossible to base an accurate opinion on what the natives say, and I have myself observed serious errors in reports on this country owing to the non-observance of this rule. I shall be careful to note, however, any extra information of a hearsay character which reaches me, stating the sources from which it comes.

I am pleased to be able to inform your Excellency that I have already completed a considerable part of the proposed reconnaissances. Thus, I have finished routes Nos. 1, 3, 10, 11, 15, 16, 17, and a considerable part of routes Nos. 2, 5, 6, 22, 24, and 25.

The remaining portions I shall gradually fit in, giving them, in a final report, my impressions as to the possibility of an advance from Trans-Caucasia by all arms over the routes examined.

I would beg to add that I have, of course, no intention to cross the frontier into Trans-Caucasia in carrying out this work.

I shall now give a précis of the work already carried out, details of which shall be submitted later, as well as some observations of a general character on the nature of the country bordering the Turco–Trans-Caucasian frontier.

The whole country along both sides of the frontier, from the Black Sea at Khopa to Mount Ararât at Bayazid, presents a series of mountain ranges more or less lofty and difficult to traverse, intersected in all directions with stony ravines and river beds with, here and there, a road or bridle track by which access into either country is most difficult, the obstacles presenting themselves to military movements being, in most parts, very great, although a few easy roads exist.

Through these mountains, from the Black Sea to Olti, it is said that no really practicable passage exists for a force of all arms, although tracks exist for infantry or cavalry.

Indeed, good roads in this stretch are hardly so important as further south, as in the event of Russia holding command of the Black Sea she could effect a landing at most points on the Anatolian coast.

From Olti there are two somewhat difficult routes into Turkey, which, amongst others, I propose to examine and report upon fully, as road-making operations have been carried on during the last three or four years, which may have facilitated wheeled traffic since these routes were last reported upon.

Further to the south-east we have the main line of approach, Kars–Sari–Kamlish–Kutek–Hussan Kaleh–Erzeroum, perfectly practicable for all arms, and a road which may be described as easy for military movements in this country. A little more to the east we find the roads Erzeroum–Hussan Kaleh–Ardost–Khorasan–Upper Mejingert–Sarikamush, and Delibaba–Kara Kelissé–Bashkeui–Sarikamush both quite good for wheeled traffic, on good authority, as Captain Callwell's topographical work on this country, compiled by our Intelligence Department in 1892.

Further to the east we find military roads practically non existent, until nearing the eastern frontier towards Bayazid. Here there are several easy roads into Alashgird.

The mountains to the north, from the Black Sea to Olti, are high, precipitous, and rugged, the water-courses, ravines, and bridle-paths rough and stoney. To the east of Olti the nature changes, the mountains assuming the nature of rounded upland pastures, the valleys being broader and passes easier.

These circumstances, as well as strategical reasons which make an advance on the part of Russia into Melasgird, Passen, and Khunus, and towards the important Bitlis defile, highly probable in any future campaign, combine to render it probable that the Russian advance would be chiefly by the lines Sari Kamush–Zevin–Hussan Kaleh or Bayazid–Melasgird, or by both these routes. This is the opinion expressed in Captain Callwell's excellent work, above quoted. This opinion appears to be also shared by the Turkish military authorities, as the recent considerable reinforcement of infantry to Hussan Kaleh and Delibaba prove. It is said that these troops are to be further increased, gradually, to a force of 30,000 men of all arms, including Hamidieh cavalry. That such a force will be assembled I doubt, in time of peace, although if time be given for mobilization on the outbreak of hostilities, an attempt to do so would be made. The advantages of this Delibaba position are great, as a sufficient force there assembled prevents the junction of a force entering Alashgird with one which has penetrated into Passen, while the communications of both such forces are threatened should they attempt to advance further west or south-west. It is said that some detached forts are to be constructed at the Delibaba Pass, but on this point I have as yet no reliable information. The value of this position depends entirely, however, on its being of sufficient strength. By degrees, this important measure may be put into force—one to which they appear to be alive this year for the first time.

There remains the consideration of the roads Olti–Nairman–Erzeroum, Olti–Nairman–Hussan Kaleh–Erzeroum, Olti–Sivri–Chai–Tortoum–Kaleh, and upon these I have at present no personal knowledge. Their practicability for military movements is of great importance, opening up the possibility of the advance of a third column towards Baibourt and Erzinjian, and cutting the Turkish communications in those directions, while turning the Erzeroum defences.

I have made the above remarks, preliminary to an examination of all these routes in detail, as showing the importance of such a detailed reconnaissance so as to establish, once and for all, the practicable lines of advance of a Russian army into this country. We possess much valuable information as to such routes, but owing to one person never having been able to personally complete the subject, we find in all our works on this part

of the country what may be termed doubtful, or hearsay reconnaissances, which, in my opinion, are worse than none, being, often, quite incorrect.

To return to the details of routes and to the geography of the frontier. The general features of the mountain ranges, from the Black Sea to Olti, are, as already stated, rugged, rocky, and precipitous. From Olti north, these rugged mountains continue west into Turkey, as far as a line from Olti, down the Livri Chai (river) by Tortoum-Kaleh towards Keskin, on the Tchoroük Sou (river). West of this line a remarkable change is noticeable. The precipitous, rugged peaks, with the rough tracks and stony valleys, give place to a series of high, but rounded mountain tops, separated by upland pasture valleys, more in the nature of rolling downs than of steep, rocky mountains. Across these many roads run, practicable for the local ox-carts, several of which converge as a common centre on the Doumlou Mountains, near the source of the Euphrates. Besides these, many other roads run up the main valleys, by the side of the streams.

The two most striking points, then, in a reconnaissance of this country west of the frontier and north of the Erzeroum Plain are the sudden contrast, above stated, in the nature of the mountains and distinctly separated by the above-mentioned approximate line, and the great number of roads leading over these western mountains both east, south, and west and through the valleys, below, in the same directions. The roads to the east of the line already mentioned are rare and difficult. The western mountains, although of this rounded, easy, character, assume, nevertheless, considerable elevations, the passages which radiate from the Doumlon, at the Euphrates source being over 10,000 feet high, the peaks around rising, perhaps, to 1,000 feet higher. It is strange then, to see ox-carts passing over this region, heavily laden, with comparative ease. To cite cases in point, the heavy baggage of my party accompanied me in ox-carts from Rabat, near Tortoum-Kaleh, to Doumlon with ease. During my journey I passed ox-carts heavily laden with timber, travelling from the Ardt district near the Russian frontier, north of Olti, to Erzeroum, by the Doumlon and, hence, down to Ak Dach village on to the Erzeroum Plain. They had chosen this route, although the general road followed is by Shipek and Gira Guzek, which shows that it must be considered an easy one for laden carts.

Of the routes traversed by me in this region north and north-east of Erzeroum I have ascertained, by personal inspection, that the road Erzeroum–Hinsk–Sülkek–Tortoum-Kaleh is fit for wheeled traffic and for the passage of all arms. My heavy baggage came by it very easily in well-laden ox-carts. North of Shipek the Chavel Pass presents the only difficulty, on the other side, after a steep ascent, the Tortoum Valley having to be reached over 2,000 feet below. A road over this pass, and to the bottom of the valley, commenced last year, is now nearing completion and will be quite finished before winter. It is, in fact, now being used by the wood carts to Erzeroum. It is well made, ascends and descends zig-zag and is 11 or 12 feet wide throughout. This road, which opens up the Tortoum Valley to easy communication, is excellent, throughout, for guns, and is to be continued next spring to Keskin and Ispir. If the project be not left half carried out it is eventually to be made practicable for wheels to Rizeh. The Kaïmakam of Ispir told me, a few weeks ago, that he had commenced work north of his town. This I shall personally ascertain during my visit to him, shortly.

I might further mention that a friend of mine came out from Erzeroum to Tortoum a few days ago over this road and the Chavel Pass in a light two-wheeled cart, without even a skid to the wheels.

Another route examined by me is that leading from Tortoum-Kaleh to Kurangos and Zimvor villages, in the Tortoum Chai (River) Valley, and thence to Doumlon Dagh and the source of the Euphrates.

There are two routes available as far as Kurangos, both practicable for laden ox-carts. Hence, also, several roads rise from the valley to the open down-shaped mountains on either side. From Tortoum-Kaleh I am acquainted with both routes to Zimvor and with all the routes, thence, towards Doumlon. One route to Zimvor ascends the valley of the Tortoum Sou, bordering the stream, at an easy gradient the whole way. The one thing against this road is that it is very stony and rough, but laden carts pass and artillery (field) can also conquer any difficulties which exist. This road passes the villages of Pucheus, Gasrig (just above it to the east), and Kurangos.

The second route to Zimvor village rises to Rabat village and to a point, south, on the mountain range, south of the Tortoum River, and perhaps 1,000 feet above it. It then gradually descends to the valley again, passing the villages of Gasrig and Kurangos to Zimvor. This road has steep gradients throughout, but it was followed by my heavily-laden ox-carts in preference to the valley route, as it is smooth and free from stones.

Both these roads I consider fit for field artillery and for waggons, although I cannot

say that either would be thought fit, in their present state, in Europe for a constant line of communication. Yet it is certain that a force sufficiently great to aid in the turning of the Erzeroum defences, and also to be quite capable of self-defence from any Turkish force which it might have to encounter at the outset of a campaign—say from 30,000 to 40,000 men of all arms—could pass this way if once in the Tortoum Valley. This latter point I shall consider in a future despatch, as well as the matter of another route from Olti to Zimvor and Doumlon, passing on the higher slopes of the mountains, more to the south of Tortoum Valley, which would avoid the necessity of the descent into this valley followed by the subsequent ascent to the Doumlon Plateau. That such a route, easy for laden carts, exists, I am informed by many of the local inhabitants, but I prefer to make quite certain of this by personal inspection at some convenient time.

From Zimvor to Doumlon the road followed by me ascends the Tortoum Sou Valley at a very gentle slope for about 1 mile, then, leaving the stream, ascends the slope to the south of the valley, and, proceeding generally towards the south-west, finally reaches the plateau, north of the Doumlon Mountain, after a somewhat steep rise of some six miles, mostly over open downs, which serve as pasture ground to numerous herds of cows and oxen and to flocks of sheep or goats.

This part of the road is at a steep gradient, but it is generally fairly smooth, without any large stones. Field artillery and waggons can pass over it; if, here and there, a very little levelling of the roadway were carried out towards the sloping hill-side over which it passes. There are, moreover, alternative roads, less direct, but gaining the upper plateau at a less steep gradient.

Another interesting route taken by me is that rising from Zimvor to Khosperik Zaïla village (summer village), and thence up the slopes, in a north-easterly direction, to the pass over the water-shed of the Tortoum and Ovajik valleys. The road starts up a stony valley, crosses to the valley of the Khosperik Zaïla, and then up the open slopes to the Col, just south of the Kazan Bashi Mountains, shown on the Intelligence Department Map No. 973 (c), as well as on Kiepert's Map of Asia Minor. Apart from the first valley the road is free from stones, passing over open downs. The gradients after the first valley are, here and there, steep, but no obstacle exists to the passage of field artillery of waggons.

An alternative route rises from the Tortoum Valley at Karangos, viâ Khosperik, to the Col, already mentioned. From this Col, towards the west, the Ovajik Valley spreads itself in a gentle descent, down which pass several roads which appear to be easy for wheeled traffic. I do not propose hazarding an opinion on this subject, however, as I hope to visit the Ovajik Valley later on.

Before closing this despatch I would beg to make the following remarks:—

I have not undertaken this reconnaissance with any idea of finding roads practicable for military movements of a permanent character, for which easy gradients would be so desirable. My object is more to add to our knowledge of the topography of this frontier, while ascertaining whether passages exist by which a force of limited numbers could be thrown across the frontier into Turkey, which might play an important rôle, at the outset of a campaign, in turning the Erzeroum defences and in reducing that important fortress in a few weeks instead of, perhaps, in twice as many months. In connection with such a manœuvre, it is well to bear in mind Colonel Prjevalsky's remark to me when speaking of such turning movements: "We can pass by dozens of roads; these mountains present no obstacles to us," said he. And as he is engaged in reconnaissance work, in every direction each summer for the last five years, he may be considered as an authority on such a subject. I might add that he has been all through the country now being examined by me, paying especial attention to the Keushk Valley, to the west of the Khargha Bazar Mountains and east of Tafta and Kara Göbek forts, as well as to the passes leading to the Doumlon and the Ovajik Valley.

I would beg to offer my excuses for the somewhat disconnected and discursive nature of this report. My desire has been to explain fully my subject and to leave no detail unmentioned which might convey an exact idea of the topography of this frontier to any one personally unacquainted with it. My subsequent reports on roads and districts will contain concise topographical information, as well as notes on supplies, &c., as well as sketches of routes traversed. I shall then bring the subject to a close with a further discussion on strategical possibilities, after the completion of the reconnaissance work already sketched out in this despatch.

I have, &c.
(Signed) P. H. H. MASSY,
Her Majesty's Acting Consul.

No. 24.

Sir N. O'Conor to the Marquess of Salisbury.—(*Received August 21.*)

(No. 400.)
My Lord, *Therapia, August 16, 1899.*

WITH reference to my despatch No. 338 of the 11th ultimo, forwarding copies of despatches from Her Majesty's Vice-Consul at Sivas respecting the lawless proceedings of the Karapappak Hussein Agha in the village of Manjilik, and reporting that I had brought this man's conduct to the notice of the Grand Vizier, I now have the honour to transmit copy of a further despatch from Captain Anderson, stating that Hussein Agha, together with another Kurd of equally objectionable character, Mir Ali, have been summoned to Erzinjian by Zekki Pasha.

I have, &c.
(Signed) N. R. O'CONOR.

Inclosure in No. 24.

Captain Anderson to Sir N. O'Conor.

(No. 9.)
Sir, *Sivas, August 9, 1899.*

WITH reference to the subject of my despatches Nos. 5, 6, and 7, of the 10th June, 14th June, and 2nd July respectively, I have the honour to report, for your Excellency's information, that the Karapappaks, Binbashi Hussein Agha, of Kush Kaya, and Mir Ali Bey, have been summoned by Zekki Pasha to Erzinjian, and it seems likely that they will be punished, and possible that they may be transferred to some other district.

It appears that the Vali has lately made strong representations to Constantinople about these two men, and recommended that they should be removed from this vilayet.

I have, &c.
(Signed) W. J. ANDERSON.

No. 25.

Sir N. O'Conor to the Marquess of Salisbury.—(*Received August 21.*)

(No. 401.)
My Lord, *Therapia, August 17, 1899.*

IN my despatch No. 356, Confidential, of the 20th ultimo, I had the honour to report that the Armenian Patriarch had had an audience with the Sultan, during the course of which his Beatitude had enumerated the grievances of his community, and had begged that they might be redressed, and that he had raised, among other points, the question of the election of a new Catholicos of Sis, with the details of which your Lordship is already familiar from Mr. de Bunsen's despatch No. 360 of the 13th June, 1898, reporting fully on the subject.

It would seem that his Beatitude's representations have not been without effect, for an Imperial Iradé has just been issued authorizing the election of a new Catholicos, in accordance with the ancient custom.

The election will accordingly take place on the spot, and the Synod of local Bishops will be attended by a representative of the Patriarch, who has already designated for this purpose an Armenian Bishop residing in Jerusalem.

When the election has been held, the choice of the Synod will be sanctioned by Imperial Iradé, and one of the causes of friction between the Sublime Porte and the Patriarchate will disappear.

I have, &c.
(Signed) N. R. O'CONOR.

No. 26.

Sir N. O'Conor to the Marquess of Salisbury.—(*Received September 4.*)

(No. 405.)
My Lord, *Constantinople, August 28, 1899.*

I HAVE the honour to transmit to your Lordship herewith copy of a despatch which I have received from the British Acting Consul at Erzeroum reporting on the distribution of troops on the north-eastern frontier, and containing other information of a military nature.

I have, &c.
(Signed) N. R. O'CONOR.

Inclosure in No. 26.

Major Mussy to Sir N. O'Conor.

(No. 34.)
Sir, *Erzeroum, August 5, 1899.*

IN continuation of the information conveyed to your Excellency in my cypher despatch of the 3rd ultimo as to movements of troops from Erzeroum to the north-eastern frontier in Passen and Alashgird, I have the honour to now give the stations of the troops now actually in these districts:—

25th Regiment, battalion head-quarters at Nairman, Bayazid, Eshkhan, and Bayazid respectively.

26th Regiment, second battalion at Hassan Kaleh.

28th Regiment, three first battalions at Topzak Kaleh, Khorassan, and Deli Baba respectively.

This leaves in Erzeroum four battalions of regular infantry only.

There are three cavalry regiments on the frontier, namely, the 19th at Kara Kelissé and frontier posts, the 22nd at Hassan Kaleh and frontier, the 24th at Tor Khodja village, just west of the Deli Baba Pass.

In my telegram, already mentioned, I stated that these reinforcements were sent in view of the feeling of distrust which existed regarding Russia. It would appear from what I have since heard that this is quite true, the ostensible reason now given being that, at that time, fears of Armenian incursions in large bodies were feared. It was then reported that 30,000 Armenians, fully armed with Russian Government rifles, were to be sent across the frontier with a view to their fighting their way through to their original homes in Turkey.

That such a report proved to be unfounded does not show that the local authorities did not entertain such a fear, and this may have been the real reason for dispatching reinforcements.

But I cannot help thinking that this occasion was seized in order to gradually increase the force assembled in the neighbourhood of the Deli Baba Pass, which is a most important strategic point. This version has been given to me by several officers. We shall be able to ascertain this by degrees, however, as in the event of these troops being left at their present stations it is certain that measures will have to be taken to increase the present reduced Erzeroum garrison.

I have lately been told, on good authority, that an extra division, similar to the 19th Division at Kharput, is to be formed to reinforce this army corps. I cannot answer for this report, but I am taking steps to verify the information, and shall then inform your Excellency as to its truth.

General Suleiman Pasha, lately in command of the Hamidieh cavalry at Khunus, has been relieved by General Ahmed Pasha, from Erzinjian, and has returned to army corps head-quarters. It would appear that he has fallen a victim to Zekki Pasha's pandering to the Kurds, in spite of the Mushir being his near relative, as it is said that Suleiman Pasha has been recalled in consequence of representations from the Zereki tribe of Kurds, whose bloody fight I reported on the 4th ultimo to your Excellency, in consequence of his energetic action in endeavouring to quell that fray.

All is now quiet, in general, amongst the Kurds in these parts, as well as with regard to any unfavourable rumours of a disquieting nature.

I have, &c.
(Signed) P. H. H. MASSY,
Her Majesty's Acting Consul.

No. 27.

Sir N. O'Conor to the Marquess of Salisbury.—(Received September 4.)

(No. 407. Confidential.)
My Lord, *Therapia, August 29, 1899.*

IN reply to your Lordship's despatch No. 195, Confidential, of the 22nd instant, I have the honour to report that the attention of Her Majesty's Embassy has been drawn from time to time to the case of the ex-Armenian Patriarch Ismirlian and the other two Armenian ecclesiastics who are detained at Jerusalem, and that representations have been made in their favour as opportunity offered.

Artin Pasha stated, in reply to Lord Currie's inquiries in February 1897, that the ex-Patriarch was not actually in exile, and that after a certain time he would doubtless be at liberty to reside where he pleased. He is, however, still detained at Jerusalem, and Mr. Consul Dickson has furnished me with several reports concerning him, showing that his Beatitude is seriously incommoded by the manner in which he is watched and followed about by the police; and that though he enjoys the ordinary comforts of life he is virtually a prisoner within Jerusalem and the immediate neighbourhood. In February last his promised salary of £T 20 a-month was ten months in arrear.

I am happy to state that I was able to obtain for him the payment of these arrears, as gratefully acknowledged by his Beatitude in conversation with Mr. Dickson a month later. As regards his general position, however, I cannot claim to have brought about any improvement, nor am I sanguine of being able to do so. On the 10th July Mr. Block, by my direction, called Tewfik Pasha's attention to the matter, but from the inclosed copy of a despatch from Mr. Dickson, No. 31, Confidential, of the 8th instant, your Lordship will see that the ex-Patriarch's treatment has undergone no change as yet. I also inclose in copy an earlier despatch from Mr. Dickson (No. 24, Confidential, of the 12th June), reporting a recent conversation with his Beatitude. The last in date of these two despatches gives an account of the manner in which the ex-Patriarch was induced to leave Constantinople.

I will continue to bear the matter in mind, and will renew my representations if I should see an opportunity of doing so with any prospect of success. Meanwhile, it does not appear that his Beatitude has much to complain of apart from being obliged to live in a place not of his own choosing; and your Lordship will see that Mr. Dickson has reported that the other ecclesiastics, on whose behalf your Lordship has been addressed by the Armenian Committee, have made no complaint, and appear to be resigned to their position.

I have, &c.
(Signed) N. R. O'CONOR.

Inclosure 1 in No. 27.

Consul Dickson to Sir N. O'Conor.

(No. 24. Confidential.)
Sir, *Jerusalem, June 12, 1899.*

WITH reference to my despatch No. 12 of the 16th March last, I have the honour to inform your Excellency that I recently met Mgr. Ismirlian, the ex-Armenian Patriarch, and had a conversation with him.

His Beatitude stated that he was very much irritated and annoyed at the constant surveillance to which he was subjected on the part of the Turkish police. Not only is he not permitted to go as far as Jaffa, but should he find it necessary to visit Bethlehem for devotional purposes, as he has occasion to do once or twice lately, his departure is at once announced to the Bethlehem authorities by telegraph, and he is accompanied by two mounted gendarmes, and the same thing occurs when he leaves Bethlehem to return to Jerusalem.

He pointed out that when he came to Jerusalem he was the bearer of a letter of introduction from the Grand Vizier to the Mutessarif declaring that he had chosen Jerusalem as his place of residence, and recommending him to the good offices of the authorities in general. Their conduct, however, ever since his arrival has been in complete contradiction with the terms of this letter, for he is practically a prisoner, and is being continually spied upon.

Under such circumstances, he feels that his position is scarcely bearable, especially in the eyes of the other Eastern clergy, and he begged that I would find an opportunity of mentioning the above facts to your Excellency.

I have, &c.
(Signed) JOHN DICKSON.

Inclosure 2 in No. 27.

Consul Dickson to Sir N. O'Conor.

(No. 31. Confidential.)
Sir, *Jerusalem, August 8, 1899.*

IN confirmation of my despatch No. 24, Confidential, of the 12th June last, I have the honour to report to your Excellency a few further details respecting the exile of the ex-Armenian Patriarch, Mgr. Ismirlian, to Jerusalem, and his present position, which I gathered from his Beatitude during an interview which I recently had with him.

His Beatitude recounted to me the whole of the circumstances connected with his banishment (for he declines to consider his position here otherwise than that of an exile) to this city, and I would beg to submit to your Excellency a short summary of his statements.

He informed me that on the 22nd June (o. s.) (4th July), 1896, he resigned his post of Armenian Patriarch at Constantinople, but that two days later the Sultan sent him a verbal message through Artin Pasha (Under-Secretary for Foreign Affairs) assuring him that if he were to remain quiet and live in retirement, he would not be interfered with, and would be permitted to reside in the capital. This assurance was repeated and confirmed a short time after through Gabriel Noradikian Effendi, of the Ministry for Foreign Affairs.

On the 6th August (o. s.) the Vicar, or representative at Constantinople of the Armenian Patriarch of Jerusalem, called upon his Beatitude, on the part of Artin Pasha, in order to persuade him to present a Petition to the Sultan praying that he might be allowed to proceed to this city and live here in retirement, as will be seen from a letter addressed by Artin Pasha to Said Pasha, President of the Council of State, of which I beg to inclose herewith a translation.

On the 23rd August (o. s.) (4th September), 1896, the day Mgr. Ismirlian declares, before the return of Sir Philip Currie from leave of absence, his house at Scutari was suddenly surrounded by the police, and an official named Moustafa Effendi presented himself with a letter from the Grand Vizier to the Governor of Jerusalem (a translation of which was forwarded in my despatch No. 6 of the 1st February, 1897), and requested his Beatitude to accompany him forthwith to Jerusalem. He offered no resistance, and left Constantinople the same day by the Turkish steamer "Crete," of the Mahsoussa Company.

On the 1st September (o. s.) his Beatitude arrived at Jerusalem, and since then has been living in the Armenian Monastery of St. James, as has already been reported in previous despatches, but he is not permitted to go outside the suburbs of Jerusalem, and is practically an exile and a prisoner, his movements being continually watched by the police. Besides, although one of the highest Prelates of the Armenian Church, he is prohibited from taking part in any of the religious ceremonies or services in the Church of the Holy Sepulchre. Special instructions to this effect were furnished to the Armenian Patriarch of Jerusalem through the Armenian Patriarch at Constantinople by the Minister of Justice in a communication dated the 9th February, 1898, in which his Excellency enjoins upon the Patriarch not to allow the ex-Patriarch and the other exiled Armenian Prelates, Mgr. Chichmanian, and the Archimandrite Nersès to assist in the religious services of the Church of the Holy Sepulchre.

A translation of the reply of the Armenian Patriarch of Constantinople to the

Minister of Justice, acknowledging the receipt of these instructions, is herewith inclosed.

Mgr. Ismirlian remarks, not without some plausibility, that his position here is entirely a false one. He arrived in September 1896 with a letter (already referred to) addressed by the Grand Vizier to the Governor of Jerusalem, stating that he wished to come and live in Jerusalem, and would be allotted 2,000 piastres a-month as an allowance, whereas the real facts are that his house at Scutari was suddenly surrounded by the police; he was compelled to embark hurriedly on an Ottoman steamer, and has been confined in a monastery in this city, and his movements continually watched, and attempts have been made to withhold the payment of his allowance. He has thus, in the eyes of the world, been made to appear a free agent, whereas he is practically an exile. He has repeatedly asserted that he would much rather have been banished to a fortress and kept a close prisoner, when he could either ask to be tried for his offences (whatever they may be) or throw himself on the clemency of the Sultan, than be placed in the situation in which he now is. He is, he alleges, to all intents and purposes a person condemned without a trial, and without any specific charge having been brought against him, whilst, at the same time, he is made to appear to the world to have come to reside here of his own free will. Under these circumstances, he scorns either to petition the Sultan or the Grand Vizier to be permitted to leave Jerusalem, or to take any steps which would indicate that he is not a perfectly free agent. If the Grand Vizier informed officially the Governor of Jerusalem that he came to Jerusalem by his own desire, why then, he argues, is he not permitted to depart if he wishes, and reside where he pleases?

During the several interviews which I have had with his Beatitude it has been impossible not to remark that his spirit is pining under the restraint under which he is placed, and that he cannot endure with patience the fact that he has been "duped" by the Turkish authorities. A man of his restless disposition cannot long remain in such a situation, and brood over his wrongs, without detriment to his health, and he asserts that he has been ill more than once since his arrival. As regards personal discomforts, his Beatitude cannot be said to endure any great hardship, and he admits this, for his apartments, though small and meanly furnished, are airy and dry, and, compared with similar lodgings in this country, cannot be said to be uncomfortable; and as to his food, I believe he is under no restrictions in this respect, but can provide himself with everything in the way of provisions which is usually allowed in monastic establishments.

With regard to the other two Prelates, Ghévont Chickmanian, ex-Bishop of Erzeroum, and the Archimandrite Nersès Karakhanian, who have also been banished to this city, I have received no complaints of late from them; but they seem to be completely resigned to their situation, and, I understand, are trying, with the object of being finally liberated, to conciliate as much as possible the Turkish authorities.

I have, &c.
(Signed) JOHN DICKSON.

Inclosure 3 in No. 27.

Artin Pasha to Said Pasha.

(Translation.) *Constantinople, August* 6 (18), 1896.

IN obedience to the Imperial orders conveyed to me through your Excellency, I beg to submit the result of the steps taken by me with the object of inducing the ex-Armenian Patriarch, Mathéos Effendi, to leave Constantinople and proceed to Jerusalem.

Having failed in my endeavours to persuade the said Patriarch to quit the capital and live in Jerusalem, I requested the priest Kevork (the representative of the Jerusalem Patriarch in Constantinople), to go and see him specially and use his influence for the above purpose.

This morning I received a note from the said priest, of which I beg to inclose herewith a translation, from which your Excellency will perceive that the ex-Patriarch states that having been promised and assured that he will be allowed to remain in Constantinople, he has just hired a house at Scutari, thus incurring much expense in moving thither, and that, moreover, the state of his health does not permit him to leave the place, and more especially to undertake a journey to Jerusalem and reside there,

but that nevertheless, in case he should be compelled to depart, he cannot do otherwise but obey orders.

In submitting the above I would venture to suggest and express my humble opinion that if your Excellency will see fit and proper the sending away of the said Patriarch should not for a time be insisted upon, unless he should in the meanwhile give reason calling for action to the contrary.

Inclosure 4 in No. 27.

The Armenian Patriarch of Constantinople to the Minister of Justice.

(Translation.) *Constantinople, June* 20, 1313 (*July* 2, 1898).

I HAVE the honour to acknowledge the receipt of your Excellency's communication dated the 9th February, 1313 (21st February, 1898), in which your Excellency states that the ex-Patriarch Ismirlian Effendi, and the Bishop Ghévont Chichmanian and the priest Nersès Karakhanian, who are living at Jerusalem, have profited by the indisposition of the Armenian Patriarch of that place and have been discharging the religious duties which appertain to his office, and that they have also acted for the Patriarch during certain religious ceremonies in the Church of the Holy Sepulchre; and your Excellency disapproves of the attention shown to those ecclesiastics on the part of the Patriarch, and orders that he should abstain from such conduct, and at the same time your Excellency directs that the said Patriarch should also take such precautions that no quarrels or disturbance should take place on the part of the Armenians during the approaching Easter festivals.

I lost no time in communicating your Excellency's order to his Beatitude Artin Effendi, and I have now received a reply from him in which he states that there is no truth whatever in the assertion that the ex-Patriarch Ismirlian or the other two ecclesiastics have intermeddled with the duties appertaining to him in the performance of certain religious services, but that it is customary during festivals that all the clergy in the monastery, whether members of the Jerusalem Brotherhood or visitors, who happen to be guests in the monastery, take part without distinction, and assist at the religious services and ceremonies; and that as regards the warning against disturbances in the Church of the Holy Sepulchre, the Patriarch declares that the Armenians have never given cause for any quarrel in the church, and whatever happened in former years was not caused by the Armenians, as it has been duly proved to the Imperial Government.

The Patriarch adds, however, that he has been very much distressed to hear the imputations made regarding his conduct, his thoughts and efforts having been incessantly directed towards being faithful and true to His Imperial Majesty the Sultan, who has always been bestowing his good-will and benevolence on him. Consequently, the Patriarch is most anxious to affirm to your Excellency that he has stated the truth of the whole affair.

No. 28.

Sir N. O'Conor to the Marquess of Salisbury.—(Received September 4.)

(No. 414.)
My Lord, *Constantinople, August* 30, 1899.

I HAVE the honour to transmit herewith copy of a despatch from the Acting British Consul at Aleppo reporting that the interior, extending from the Plain of Souroudge, the neighbourhood of Urfa and the Plain of Harran as far as Mosul, is in a state of terror owing to the lawless proceedings of the Hamidié troops and their Colonel, Ibrahim Pasha.

I am communicating the substance of this despatch unofficially to the Grand Vizier.

I have, &c.
(Signed) N. R. O'CONOR.

Inclosure in No. 28.

Acting Consul Falanga to Sir N. O'Conor.

(No. 29.) *Aleppo, August* 18, 1899.

Sir,

I HAVE the honour to bring to your Excellency's notice that all the interior extending from the Plain of Sourondge, the neighbourhood of Urfa, and the Plain of Harran, as far as Mosul, has been in a state of terror for these last three months, caused by repeated acts of brigandage and atrocities committed by the Kurds mostly belonging to the Hamidié troops under the command of Ibrahim Pasha, their Colonel.

Almost every inhabitant of the poor Turkish villages in the neighbourhood of Sourondge and Urfa has suffered more or less from the attacks of these people, who break into their homes armed with Martini rifles and carry away their sheep, horses, provisions, clothes, and everything they find useful, beating and ill-treating the women and children and often killing them.

The inhabitants of many villages having been deprived of all means of existence, had to quit their homes and take refuge in Urfa and Sourondge, where they beg for their daily bread.

Camel caravans and mules carrying merchants' goods are daily robbed on the public roads.

One month ago a caravan composed of eighty camels laden with sugar, coffee, petroleum, and manufactured goods, was stopped on its way from Aleppo to Mosul, and every load was carried off.

Ibrahim Pasha telegraphed to the authorities at Bagdad advising them of the fact, and added that his own life was in danger as he had not sufficient force to repress so strong a force of armed men.

The Bagdad authorities sent one of their officials to the spot where Ibrahim Pasha was at that time, to make inquiries and verify the facts. He was received in the tent of the Pasha, and during the night a volley of musketry passed over and round the tent. The Pasha ordered his men to arms, and several shots were heard at a distance.

Of course no result was known, for the whole affair was merely a sham fight got up by the Pasha himself between his men, in order to show the inspector that his position was difficult.

It is a known fact that all these doings are guided and commanded by Ibrahim Pasha himself for purposes of plunder.

The authorities are quite incompetent, and have lost all prestige in the interior, firstly, for want of force to repress the abuses committed, and, secondly, in not being able to punish even an ordinary villager, though an assassin, who can show the Hamidié coat of arms on his fez, and declare that he is a faithful sworn soldier of His Majesty.

Near Sourondge, a Mudzin of the Hamidié's killed a poor Turk belonging to the village of Pidjanly; the relatives of the murdered man appealed to the authorities of Sourondge for justice, but the Mudzin was not even asked to appear before a Tribunal.

Some three weeks after, the son of the murdered man, a boy of 15 years of age, happened to come across the assassin and killed him with a bullet from his rifle. The authorities of Sourondge sent at once fifteen soldiers (Nizamiés) to arrest the boy at his village and take him to Sourondge.

The villagers all armed themselves, and in a body refused to deliver the boy, saying that they had applied to the authorities asking the punishment of the assassin of the boy's father, and nothing being done, the son was now right in punishing the man himself. This matter was altogether left and forgotten.

A Commission composed of four officers of high rank arrived here from Constantinople and left last week for the interior. They are said to have come on a special mission for the investigation of Ibrahim Pasha's behaviour and doings.

I have, &c.

(Signed) J. FALANGA.

No. 29.

Sir N. O'Conor to the Marquess of Salisbury.—(*Received September* 11.)

(No. 422. Confidential.) *Therapia, September* 4, 1899.

My Lord,

WITH reference to my despatch No. 319 of the 28th June, and previous correspondence, respecting the election of the Prelate to fill the vacancy in the Orthodox Patriarchate of Antioch, I have the honour to transmit to your Lordship herewith copy of a despatch from Her Majesty's Consul at Jerusalem reporting a conversation which he has recently held with Mgr. Damianos, Orthodox Patriarch of that city, in which his Beatitude dwelt strongly on the importance of preventing the confirmation by the Turkish Government of the election of the native Syrian candidate chosen under the patronage of Russia, which, he affirmed, would be but a first step towards the complete subjection of the Orthodox Church in Syria, Palestine, and Asia Minor to Russian influence.

There are, in my opinion, many indications that the apprehensions expressed by Mgr. Damianos are justified, and similar fears are certainly entertained by other Prelates of the same community, as shown in Mr. Dickson's despatch No. 70, Confidential, of the 6th December last forwarded to your Lordship in my despatch No. 29 of the 2nd February, reporting the views of Mgr. Photios, Orthodox Archbishop of Philadelphia and Secretary to the Greek Patriarchate of Jerusalem, on this subject.

I think it probable that the visit of M. Nélidow to Syria, Palestine, and Constantinople some four months ago was indirectly connected with the furtherance of Russian policy in this direction, at any rate it is noteworthy that of the few days spent by his Excellency in Constantinople, one was devoted to a visit to Mgr. Nicodemus, ex-Patriarch of Jerusalem, who now lives in retirement at Halki, one of the Princes' Islands, and who has long been in receipt of a pension from the Russian Government, devotion to the interests of which cost him his Patriarchal throne.

I have, &c.

(Signed) N. R. O'CONOR.

Inclosure in No. 29.

Consul Dickson to Sir N. O'Conor.

(No. 34. Confidential.) *Jerusalem, August* 10, 1899.

Sir,

WITH reference to my despatch No. 70, Confidential, of the 6th December, 1898, on the subject of the influence which Russia had brought to bear in the election of the Greek Orthodox Patriarch of Antioch, with the object of procuring the nomination of a native Syrian instead of a Prelate of Greek origin as has hitherto been the custom, I have the honour to inform your Excellency that I recently had occasion to pay a private visit to the Greek Patriarch in this city, and he took the opportunity of commenting on the strenuous efforts which continue to be made by Russia to induce the Porte to recognize the election of Mgr. Meletios, a native Syrian, who, as the result of her efforts, the Synod at Damascus have nominated Patriarch of Antioch.

Mgr. Damianos pointed out to me that the whole of the Greek Orthodox community in Syria and Palestine were anxiously awaiting the decision of the Porte in either confirming or rejecting the vote of the Damascus Synod, and that should the election of Mgr. Meletios receive recognition, Russia will bring indirectly under her influence from 200,000 to 250,000 members of the Greek Church, as the Patriarchal See of Antioch extends from Damascus to Erzeroum and even Kars. These 200,000 members of the Greek Church seeing the success obtained by Russia in securing the confirmation of her candidate will naturally consider her influence as paramount in Western Asia and Palestine, and will look up to her for protection and guidance.

Further, Russia will not be slow in introducing her own clergy into the Greek Orthodox Church both in Syria and Asia Minor, even though they have to turn Ottoman subjects, as she has done at Mount Athos, where now one of the monasteries has become Russian with a Russian Superior, and will finally secure the election of a Russian as Patriarch of Antioch. Once this is accomplished, the appointment of a

Russian Patriarch in Jerusalem will follow sooner or later as a matter of course, and the native population of the Greek Orthodox faith in the East, as well as the Holy Places, will fall under Russian protection. Mgr. Damianos laid much stress on this action of Russia in undermining the status of the Greek Eastern Church, and seemed to consider that serious political complications must ensue. He therefore felt that it was most important that the Porte should not confirm the election of Mgr. Meletios, the Russian candidate, as Patriarch of Antioch.

His Beatitude went on to say that he did not think that the Russian Minister for Foreign Affairs, and some of the other members of the Russian Government, entirely approved of the policy above referred to, but he pointed out that the Grand Duke Sergius, who is President of the Russian Palestine Society, was strongly in favour of it, and that both on account of his relationship as uncle of the Czar and brother-in-law to the Empress, he exercised great influence on His Majesty and had brought him round to his views on this subject.

Mgr. Damianos also added that the ex-Jerusalem Patriarch Nicodemus, who had been compelled to resign his seat as Patriarch some years ago on account of his subservience to Russia, and who is now residing in the Prince's Islands, is being made use of by Russia to privately induce the Sultan and the Porte to favour her views and to issue the Firman for the recognition of Mgr. Meletios as Patriarch of Antioch.

I have, &c.
(Signed) JOHN DICKSON.

No. 30.

Sir F. Lascelles to the Marquess of Salisbury.—(Received September 18.)

(No. 225.)
My Lord, *Berlin, September 14, 1899.*

THE Cologne *Gazette* learns from Constantinople that the Members of the German Commission charged with the preliminary investigations for the projected extension of the Anatolian Railway to Bagdad, arrived at Constantinople on the 6th instant. This expedition is being undertaken by order of the Board of Directors of the Anatolian Railway Company and in agreement with the French Vitalis group of the Ottoman Bank. The results of the investigation are to serve as a basis for the construction of the Bagdad Railway. The Commissioners will start for the interior, travelling by rail as far as Konia, about the middle of this month.

The principal Member of the Commission is Herr Stemrich, German Consul-General at Constantinople, and he will be accompanied by two engineers, Herr von Kapp and Herr Mackensen. The former built the lines Ismit–Angora, Salonica–Monastir, Salonica–Dedeagatsch, and the Smyrna–Cassaba Extension; the latter built the railway from Eskischehir to Konia.

The "Post" publishes the following particulars with reference to this question:—

"On the 20th August of this year a Protocol was signed at Wiesbaden on the subject of the German Commission of investigation, in which the Ottoman Bank group, which had concluded an Agreement with the 'Deutsche Bank' respecting the construction of the Bagdad Railway, declared that Herr von Kapp would also act as their Delegate upon the Commission. It is expected that the Iradé will now be issued, authorizing the German Commission to commence their labours. These will not be completed until next April, and it will not be possible before that date to arrive at a decision upon the question of the construction of the Bagdad Railway, a matter in which all diplomatic circles evince the deepest interest. The costs of the preliminary expedition will probably amount to 1,000,000 fr."

The same paper then observes that for some time past a portion of the English press have been carrying on a campaign against the German project, and have agitated in favour of the counter-project which was submitted to the Turkish Government by M. Recknitzer, and which has the support of English capitalists. Germans are, however, convinced that these rival proposals are not of a nature to place serious difficulties in the way of the German project. At any rate, the article concludes, there is no foundation for the report that the Recknitzer proposals have prevailed.

I have, &c.
(Signed) FRANK C. LASCELLES.

No. 31.

Sir N. O'Conor to the Marquess of Salisbury.—(Received September 20.)

(No. 425.)
My Lord, *Constantinople, September 11, 1899.*

WITH reference to my despatch No. 388 of the 5th ultimo, I have the honour to transmit to your Lordship herewith copy of a despatch which I have received from Her Majesty's Consul-General at Bagdad, stating that the Aniza tribe of Bedouin, who had migrated thither, have returned to their home in the Vilayet of Aleppo.

I have, &c.
(Signed) N. R. O'CONOR.

Inclosure in No. 31.

Consul-General Melvill to Sir N. O'Conor.

(No. 33.)
Sir, *Bagdad, August 17, 1899.*

IN continuation of my despatch No. 28, dated the 13th ultimo, on the subject of the migration of the Aniza Bedouins from the Aleppo Vilayet, I have the honour to report that, in fact, these Bedouins did come to this vilayet, in consequence of the grazing tax on camels having been raised by the authorities at Aleppo from 1 medjidieh to 3 medjidiehs per head, while the tax in this vilayet has remained at 1 medjidieh.

2. I am informed that three of the Sheikhs of these Bedouins sent a telegram to Constantinople offering to return to the Aleppo Vilayet if the grazing tax were levied at the old rate, and that, having received a favourable reply, these people have gone back.

I have, &c.
(Signed) P. J. MELVILL, *Major.*

No. 32.

Sir N. O'Conor to the Marquess of Salisbury.—(Received September 20.)

(No. 426.)
My Lord, *Constantinople, September 11, 1899.*

I HAVE the honour to transmit to your Lordship herewith copy of a despatch which I have received from the Acting British Consul at Smyrna, reporting the arrest of eight Turks for alleged complicity in the intrigues of the "Young Turkey" party.

I have, &c.
(Signed) N. R. O'CONOR.

Inclosure in No. 32.

Acting Consul Hampson to Sir N. O'Conor.

(No. 55.)
Sir, *Smyrna, September 6, 1899.*

I HAVE the honour to report that, on the 30th ultimo, the following eight Turks were arrested here by orders from Constantinople:—

1. Nevzat Bey, lawyer and journalist.
2. Memdouh Bey, Dragoman of Vilayet.
3. Hassan Bey, lawyer.
4. Shefki Bey, Notable.
5. Sheikh Nouri Effendi.
6. Edhem Bey, Medical Officer of Municipality.
7. Ahmed Effendi, employed at Custom-house.
8. Monstafa Effendi, " "

These arrests are said to have resulted from the denunciation of a spy named Moustafa Bey, who accused the prisoners of being connected with the Committee of Young Turks in Paris.

Nevzat Bey and Edhem Bey have been banished to Bitlis, and have already left Smyrna for Angora, whence they will proceed to their place of exile.

The others are to be exiled to Castamouni.

I have, &c.
(Signed) C. S. HAMPSON.

No. 33.

Sir N. O'Conor to the Marquess of Salisbury.—(Received September 20.)

(No. 435. Confidential.)
Constantinople, September 13, 1899.
My Lord,

I HAVE the honour to transmit copy of a despatch from Her Majesty's Consul at Bussorah reporting a conversation with the Vali regarding a telegram from Constantinople published by the "Standard" on the 20th June last, reflecting on the condition of affairs in the Vilayet of Bussorah, and stating that Hamdi Pasha had complained of British intrigues.

Your Lordship will perceive that Hamdi Pasha denied the truth of the telegram both as regards the condition of his vilayet and the complaints he was alleged to have made to Constantinople respecting British intrigues.

I have, &c.
(Signed) N. R. O'CONOR.

Inclosure in No. 33.

Consul Wratislaw to Sir N. O'Conor.

(No. 37. Confidential.)
Bussorah, August 2, 1899.
Sir,

I HAVE the honour to report that I have drawn the Vali's attention to a telegram from Constantinople published in the "Standard" of the 20th June to the effect that "Hamdi Pasha, the Governor of Bussorah, complains of English intrigues. There is little doubt that the state of the province is far from satisfactory. It is filled with internecine strifes, and possibly the Vali wishes to cover his own responsibility by throwing the blame on imaginary English intrigues which, however, obtain a certain amount of credence at the Porte, partly owing to the presence of British war-ships in the Persian Gulf. The Turks believe that any attempt on the part of Russia at Bunder Abbass would be the signal for a British *coup de main*."

His Excellency thanked me for giving him the opportunity of denying the truth of this statement. He had never complained of British intrigues, nor did he know of any, nor was there any foundation for asserting that the state of the province was far from satisfactory. He had no means of ascertaining the movements of British ships of war in the Persian Gulf. As a matter of fact the province was, as I was aware, in a quieter state than usual, and he left it to me to contradict the untrue statement of the Standard's correspondent. I am of course unacquainted with the contents of Hamdi Pasha's confidential reports to Constantinople; but he is perfectly correct in asserting that the vilayet is comparatively quiet. Absolute tranquillity and order in a province like Bussorah are not to be hoped for, but under Hamdi's administration its condition is perhaps as satisfactory as can be expected and is certainly not less satisfactory than in the time of his predecessors.

His Excellency attributes the false rumours which are apparently in circulation concerning him at Constantinople to the machinations of the Nakib of Bussorah, his old and inveterate enemy, who he believes is endeavouring to intrigue him out of his post for the second time. His Excellency added that he had just said his prayers, and the truth of his statement could be relied on.

I have, &c.
(Signed) A. C. WRATISLAW.

No. 34.

Sir N. O'Conor to the Marquess of Salisbury.—(Received September 20.)

(No. 437.)
Constantinople, September 13, 1899.
My Lord,

WITH reference to previous correspondence respecting the election of an Orthodox Patriarch of Antioch, I have the honour to transmit herewith copy of a further despatch from the Acting British Consul at Damascus, stating that no steps have as yet been taken to depose Mgr. Malateos, the native Prelate elected under Russian patronage, and to reinstate Mgr. Germanos as *locum tenens* pending a fresh election, in accordance with the orders received from Constantinople at the end of May last, as reported to your Lordship in my despatch No. 266 of the 25th May.

Mr. Crow also comments on the cordial acknowledgment received by Mgr. Malateos of the telegram sent by him to the Sultan to congratulate His Majesty on the anniversary of his accession.

Mr. Crow's report would seem to indicate that the struggle is entering on a new phase, and that the party in favour of the election of a native Syrian candidate under Russian [illegible] have gained the upper hand over the supporters of a Greek Prelate backed by the other Patriarchs.

The circumstances is not surprising, in view of the assurances said to have been given some three months ago by the Vali of Syria to the [illegible] that Mgr. Malateos would soon be reinstated.

The Palace, which has all along been completely subservient to Russia in this matter, has evidently overridden once more the decision of the Porte.

I have, &c.
(Signed) N. R. O'CONOR.

Inclosure in No. 34.

Acting Consul Crow to Sir N. O'Conor.

(No. 49.)
Damascus, September 4, 1899.
Sir,

WITH reference to Mr. Richards' despatch No. 31 of the 25th May last, I have the honour to report that Mgr. Malateos continues to exercise his functions as Patriarch elect, and that no steps have as yet been taken to interfere with his election or to reinstate Mgr. Germanos, Bishop of Tarsus, as *locum tenens*. The Greek Orthodox Synod are still assembled in Damascus, and await the Sultan's sanction before proceeding to the installation of the Patriarch elect.

I am informed that Mgr. Malateos has to-day received a gracious acknowledgment from the Sultan of the congratulatory telegram dispatched by his Beatitude and his party on the anniversary of His Majesty's accession. The Sultan's message was addressed to the Greek Metropolitan.

I have, &c.
(Signed) F. E. CROW.

No. 35.

Sir N. O'Conor to the Marquess of Salisbury.—(Received September 25.)

(No. 445.)
Constantinople, September 17, 1899.
My Lord,

I HAVE the honour to transmit to your Lordship herewith copy of a despatch which I have received from Her Majesty's Consul-General at Beirut, stating that the Governor-General of the Lebanon has left on a tour in the Maronite district.

I have, &c.
(Signed) N. R. O'CONOR.

Inclosure in No. 35.

Consul-General Drummond Hay to Sir N. O'Conor.

(No. 70.) *Beirut, September 4, 1899.*

Sir,

I HAVE the honour to report to your Excellency that Nicoun Pasha, Governor-General of the Lebanon, left Beiteddin Saturday, the 2nd instant, on a tour in the district.

He will be absent from head-quarters about a month, visiting different parts of the Kaïmakamliks of Meten, Keserwan, and Batroun, but especially the two latter Maronite districts, extending his journey as far as Hermul, a large village on the north-eastern slopes of the Lebanon, facing the Anti-Lebanon.

His Excellency intends to pass by the Monastery of Dumun, the summer residence of the Maronite Patriarch, where he will make a stay of three days, and be present at a ceremony which will take place there on or about the 14th instant for the purpose of presenting to his Beatitude a vestment called "Deun-el-Iman" (defender of the faith), conveyed from Rome by the Reverend Father Basbous, a special Maronite delegate from the Pope.

The fact that the Governor-General is showing pointed attention to the Maronite Patriarch, and confining his tour this year to the Maronite districts, has given rise to unfavourable comments on the part of the other Christian sects and the Druses. It is also remarked that the members of his Excellency's staff are all Maronites.

Having not had an opportunity of meeting Nicoun Pasha this summer, I am unable to state whether he has purposely planned his journey to favour that particular denomination.

It is, however, evident that the equilibrium of the Lebanon has not been taken into consideration by his Excellency on this occasion.

I have, &c.

(Signed) R. DRUMMOND HAY.

No. 36.

Sir N. O'Conor to the Marquess of Salisbury.—(Received October 2.)

(No. 450.) *Constantinople, September 22, 1899.*

My Lord,

WITH reference to my despatch No. 426 of the 11th instant, I have the honour to transmit to your Lordship herewith copy of a despatch which I have received from the British Acting Consul at Smyrna, reporting further arrests of persons supposed to be connected with the Young Turkey party.

I have communicated a copy of the last paragraph of Mr. Hampson's despatch to Mr. Whitaker, the "Times" correspondent in this capital.

I have, &c.

(Signed) N. R. O'CONOR.

Inclosure in No. 36.

Acting Consul Hampson to Sir N. O'Conor.

(No. 60.) *Smyrna, September 18, 1899.*

Sir,

WITH reference to my despatch No. 55 of the 6th instant, I have the honour to report that the authorities of the vilayet continue to arrest and send into exile a number of persons accused of being connected with the Young Turkey party.

In Smyrna, a certain Anghopoulo, a rayah, and business partner of Nevzat Bey, whose arrest I reported in my above-mentioned despatch, has been arrested, and will be exiled immediately.

At Vourlah, two Turkish lawyers have been arrested; at Axar, a certain Mavroyeni, Mudir of the Tobacco Régie; and at Magnesia, another lawyer.

I inquired of the Vali what was the reason of these arrests. His Highness answered that he knows nothing about it; the order was sent from Constantinople, not to him, but to the Chief of Police, through Shakir Pasha.

In this connection Madjid Bey, the Vali's Political Secretary, has called my attention to the fact that, in the "Times" of the 5th September, a telegram is published from the Constantinople correspondent, stating that "Madjid Bey, the Dragoman of the Vilayet of Aidin, has been arrested in Smyrna;" and he asked me if I could secure the correction of this error. The person arrested, as reported in my despatch No. 55, is Memdouk Bey, Dragoman of the vilayet, and not Madjid Bey, who is Political Secretary.

I have, &c.

(Signed) CHARLES S. HAMPSON.

No. 37.

Sir N. O'Conor to the Marquess of Salisbury.—(Received October 2.)

(No. 454.) *Constantinople, September 25, 1899.*

My Lord,

I HAVE the honour to transmit to your Lordship herewith copy of a despatch which I have received from the Acting British Consul at Erzeroum, reporting the arrival at his post of Tewfik Pasha, Commandant of the Russo-Turkish frontier.

I have, &c.

(Signed) N. R. O'CONOR.

Inclosure in No. 37.

Major Massy to Sir N. O'Conor.

(No. 39.) *Erzeroum, September 12, 1899.*

Sir,

I HAVE the honour to report that Tewfik Pasha, lately commanding the troops at Diarbekir, and who gained so undesirable a reputation during the Sasun Commission, has arrived at his new post as Commandant and Commissioner on the Russo-Turkish frontier at Kara-Kelissé, Alashgird.

A Commission is sitting at that place, under the presidency of Colonel Zacharié Bey, of the 19th Cavalry Regiment, for the trial of certain persons accused of taking part in raids across the Russian frontier. The real culprits, however, some Kurds, have not yet been captured. It is possible that this Commission may afterwards confer upon some means to prevent those raids. One proposal might be an increase of the Turkish frontier guards, which might give a pretext for the formation of the new division of which I have lately written. It is to be regretted if some steps be not taken for the strengthening of this frontier, which now lies open at so many favourable and easy points for a Russian attack, when opportunity and pretext arise.

The report which has been circulated in the European press as to demands for guns from the Mushir, Zekki Pasha, may refer to the proposed increase in the field artillery, already reported by me to your Excellency. There is no proposal, as far as I can learn, for an immediate increase in the number of heavy guns for fortress defence, although it cannot be denied that such are required to replace the out-of-date, antiquated guns of which many would now have to take their share in the attempt to defend this point in case of war.

I have, &c.

(Signed) P. H. H. MASSY,
Her Majesty's Acting Consul.

No. 38.

Sir N. O'Conor to the Marquess of Salisbury.—(Received October 2.)

(No. 462. Confidential.) *Therapia, September 28, 1899.*

My Lord,

WITH reference to my despatch No. 450 of the 22nd instant, I have the honour to transmit to your Lordship copy of a despatch from Her Majesty's Consul at Angora reporting the arrival there of three of the persons recently arrested at Smyrna as belonging to the Young Turkey party.

It is not only at Smyrna that active measures are being taken to suppress this party. Many persons have recently been expelled from Constantinople on the suspicion of being connected with it. The complaints occasioned by the arbitrary action of the Minister of Police in this matter have at length become so serious that the Sultan could not continue to disregard them, and I understand that His Majesty has now given orders that all persons expelled without Imperial sanction should be allowed to return to Constantinople.

Although the Sultan has thus seen himself compelled to check his Minister's zeal, there can be no doubt that the Young Turks are at present the object of His Majesty's most serious preoccupation, and that he is tormented by the fear of conspiracies.

I have, &c.
(Signed) N. R. O'CONOR.

Inclosure in No. 38.

Consul Shipley to Sir N. O'Conor.

(No. 30. Confidential.)
Sir, *Angora, September* 10, 1899.

I HAVE the honour to report to your Excellency the arrival at Angora during the past ten days of nine Mussulman exiles who, it is understood here, had been arrested at Smyrna, on charges of a political nature. The individuals in question, who were under strict escort, and whose names, with the exception of that of Mehmed Effendi, a Sheikh of the Mevlevi Dervishes, have not transpired, were not allowed to communicate with any one during their stay at Angora, but were almost immediately sent on, in parties of three, to Castamouni and Sivas, the ultimate destination in the case of the latter being, it is rumoured, Bitlis.

Generally speaking, the arrival of exiles at Angora has of late years not been of so infrequent occurrence as to provoke any particular comment. On the present occasion, however, owing perhaps to the number of arrests effected, and to the fact that two at least of the prisoners were evidently persons of superior social standing, a more than usual amount of interest has been aroused among the Turkish part of the population, and while the latter are for very good reasons exceedingly cautious in discussing the matter either one way or the other, it is significant that such expression of opinion as has come to my knowledge has been decidedly favourable to the exiles, and contrary to the Government. There is in fact a general feeling of discontent among Mussulmans with the incompetence and self-seeking which are the present characteristics of a certain class of Turkish officials, and if, as is commonly believed here, it was against the abuses committed by these latter that the efforts of these exiles were being directed, it is not surprising that public sympathy should be with them rather than with the Government.

I have, &c.
(Signed) H. S. SHIPLEY.

No. 39.

Sir N. O'Conor to the Marquess of Salisbury.—(*Received October* 2.)

(No. 465.)
My Lord, *Therapia, September* 28, 1899.

I HAVE the honour to transmit herewith copy of a despatch from Her Majesty's Vice-Consul at Van, regarding the state of affairs in his district.

Your Lordship will observe that the Commission appointed (see my despatch No. 359 of the 25th July last) to inquire into the circumstances of the alleged revolutionary raid near Bashkala, has now reported that this raid really occurred, and in consideration of the attack made by the revolutionists on that occasion upon the Kurdish Chief, Sherif Bey, the proceedings against him, respecting which I reported to your Lordship in my despatches Nos. 206 and 250, have now been dropped.

Major Maunsell gives a favourable account of the Vali's administration, and the state of public order in his vilayet, and draws special attention to a reform recently introduced by his Excellency, who instead of farming out the revenue has this year retained the collection of taxes in the hands of Government officials.

I have unofficially communicated to the Sublime Porte Major Maunsell's observations on this salutary measure.

I have, &c.
(Signed) N. R. O'CONOR.

Inclosure in No. 39.

Major Maunsell to Sir N. O'Conor.

(No. 36.)
Sir, *Van, September* 10, 1899.

I HAVE the honour to report that during the period of nearly two months that I have been absent from here, there has been a complete immunity from outrage towards the Christian community of this vilayet.

The Vali's action in imprisoning eight Hamidieh Kurds, who took part in a cattle-lifting raid on Vozgipak in the spring, and the prompt recovery of some oxen stolen by the Sheveli Kurds from Varak Monastery, has doubtless been the cause of this.

The Commission sent to inquire into the revolutionist attack on Sherif Bey returned after a month's absence and reported that it was true that a band of eighteen revolutionists had made the attack, had lost two of their number and then fled into Persia. No Kurds were killed. I am still of opinion that the whole affair was got up by Sherif Bey himself, who has succeeded admirably in his plot, as apparently the whole of his previous offences and the trial which was impending against him, have been condoned as a result of his suffering this attack.

The Public Prosecutor, who was very active in endeavouring to get him imprisoned, has been transferred to Sivas.

Husni Pasha, the Military Commandant of Van, and Zekki Pasha's special adviser in this district, has been promoted Ferik.

The Mutessarif of Bashkala was very active at the time in spreading absurd and exaggerated reports of revolutionary incursions in his district, was also probably trying for advancement out of the affairs; but without success, as the Vali refused to believe his reports.

Three weeks ago, a large band of the Persian section of the Shekak Kurds were discovered by the frontier post of Serai, moving over the frontier on a raiding expedition. They were quickly driven back with loss on their side and two soldiers wounded of the Serai garrison.

Husni Pasha proposes shortly to inspect and revise the system of frontier posts on the Persian border.

I hear that his movements have created great suspicion in Persia, and that troops were collected in Salmas fearing a Turkish attack.

Three weeks ago, two Armenian revolutionists named Zeko and Neho, were shot by zaptiehs at Khan Elmali, not far from the border of the British vilayet.

They were two prominent members of Sirop's band in that district, and were on their way to Van, when they were betrayed by the villagers, strongly resisted capture and were shot. One of their rifles, the usual Russian magazine pattern, has been brought in here.

Correspondence has been discovered here from Zarouin, sister of the revolutionist Deroyan, shot in Van in January 1898. This girl was sent to Jerusalem, on, I think, the representations of Her Majesty's Embassy in place of being kept in prison, and she now utilizes this clemency to engage in treasonable correspondence.

She referred specially to the two men shot at Khan Elmali, who apparently were on their way to stir up a disturbance in this town.

Four young men of this town who were implicated in this correspondence have been imprisoned.

No sympathy has been extended to them by any of the influential Armenians of this town.

The Vali has carried out a most important scheme in the Adeljuas and Arjish Kazas of this vilayet.

Previously, the taxes of the Armenian villages were yearly bought up by Hussein Pasha, no one having the hardihood to bid against him.

On pretence of collecting tithes Hussein Pasha used to rob the villages of almost all they possessed.

This year the Vali has retained the collection entirely in the hands of Government officials with troops for protection against Kurdish raids.

By this means the villagers have escaped the exactions of Hussein Pasha and are very well contented with the new arrangement, while the Government gains in the increased amount of taxes collected.

Hussein Pasha is, of course, furious at the whole arrangement, and has complained to Zekki Pasha, who, up to the present, has shown no signs of helping him.

I venture to hope that your Excellency will think fit to support the Vali's action strongly, as the welfare of a large number of Christian villages is concerned.

This is another reason why at this juncture Hussein Pasha should be called to Erzingian as a witness in Dr. Belck's case, as stated in my No. 35 of to-day's date.

I have, &c.
(Signed) F. R. MAUNSELL.

No. 39.

Sir N. O'Conor to the Marquess of Salisbury.—(Received October 2.)

(No. 135. Commercial.)
My Lord,

Therapia, September 28, 1899.

WITH reference to my despatch No. 160, Commercial, of the 24th July, I have the honour to report further on the steps which the Anatolian Railway Company is taking with a view to an extension of their system to Bagdad and the Persian Gulf.

Having received no reply to their demand for the necessary Concession, and being anxious to exclude competitors by establishing a prior right to the construction of the new line, this Company have thought it desirable to commence active operations by appointing a Commission of experts for the purpose of going over the ground and reporting fully on the topographical features and commercial prospects of the country through which the railway will pass.

The Commission is composed of M. Stemvich, German Consul-General at Constantinople; and of M. Mackarsen, and M. Otto von Kapp, both formerly engaged in the construction and working of the Anatolian Railway. These gentlemen arrived in Constantinople in the early part of this month and their immediate departure on their mission was only delayed by the desire of the German Company to associate with them a Turkish Commissioner as President, in order that the Ottoman Government might be thus committed to a recognition of the enterprise. A written application to that effect had been made to the Minister of Public Works on the 11th August. No answer, however, was forthcoming, and the German Commission has now proceeded on its journey unaccompanied by a Turkish colleague and provided merely with letters of recommendation to the Governors-General of Koniah and Adana.

Their first stage is to Koniah, whence they are to proceed south-eastward in order to survey the districts lying on the way to the Ghiaour Dagh Mountains. They expect to strike the Euphrates at Biredjik and the Tigris at a point north of Mosul. Thence their route lies through Mosul, Erbil, Kerkouk, and Taouk to Bagdad; and so on to Kerbela, Nedjef, and Bussorah.

It is expected that they will thence proceed to Koweit.

The return journey will be made up the Euphrates Valley, bringing the Commission back to Constantinople about the end of March 1900.

I learn further that a special engineer was sent about a month ago to make surveys of the country between Angora and Kaisary, and southwards to the Tigris.

I have, &c.
(Signed) N. R. O'CONOR.

No. 40.

Sir N. O'Conor to the Marquess of Salisbury.—(Received October 16.)

(No. 476.)
My Lord,

Therapia, October 11, 1899.

I HAVE the honour to transmit herewith copy of a *note verbale* addressed by the Sublime Porte to the foreign Missions in this capital proposing to levy a surtax of 3 per cent. on all imports into the Vilayet of Aidin in order to provide funds for the relief of the distress caused by the recent earthquake in that province.

I am endeavouring to ascertain the views of my colleagues with regard to this proposal, and shall report further to your Lordship on the subject in due course. In the meanwhile, I have instructed Her Majesty's Consul at Smyrna to furnish me with any observations he may have to make as to the extent to which British commerce would be affected by the proposed surtax.

I have, &c.
(For the Ambassador),
(Signed) M. DE BUNSEN.

Inclosure in No. 40.

Note Verbale.

(Circulaire.)

LES tremblements de terre qui ont secoué dernièrement le sol du Vilayet d'Aïdin ont causé de très grands dégâts et plongé dans la misère plus de 80,000 personnes sans compter les habitants de certains villages et bourgs qui ont eu également à souffrir des mouvements séismiques. Une somme considérable est nécessaire pour subvenir aux besoins les plus urgents de ces populations éprouvées et pour achever la construction des baraquements destinés à leur habitation.

Le Gouvernement Impérial désire se procurer une partie de cette somme par une surtaxe de 3 piastres à percevoir pendant une année sur les importations de la province précitée.

Les sommes qui proviendraient de ce droit additionnel seront dépensées par les soins d'une Commission *ad hoc* instituée sur les lieux et composée de membres Ottomans et étrangers.

En ayant l'honneur de porter ce qui précède à la connaissance de l'Ambassade de Sa Majesté Britannique, le Ministère Impérial est persuadé qu'elle voudra bien, dans ses sentiments d'humanité bien connus, donner son consentement à la perception de la surtaxe dont il s'agit et transmettre partant à son Agent à Smyrne des instructions en conséquence.

Sublime Porte, le 5 Octobre, 1899.

No. 41.

Sir N. O'Conor to the Marquess of Salisbury.—(Received October 16.)

(No. 483. Confidential.)
My Lord,

Therapia, October 12, 1899.

MGR. ORMANIAN, the Gregorian Armenian Patriach, driven to desperation at last by his failure to obtain redress for the grievances of his people, handed in his resignation on the 5th instant to the Ottoman Minister of Justice and Public Worship.

He assigned as his principal motive the increased persecution to which the Armenians are exposed at the hands of the Minister of Police, their rigid confinement within their own districts, and their frequent arbitrary imprisonment, regardless of the passports which they hold. By these means he stated that they were being rapidly reduced to a state of bankruptcy, famine, and misery.

Artin Pasha has not failed to represent to the Sultan the dangers which must ensue from perseverance in the treatment of which complaint has so long been made without any appreciable result, and the Minister of Justice and Public Worship has now received

instructions to refuse peremptorily the Patriarch's resignation and to assure him that something will now be done within a very few days to give satisfaction to all concerned. His Beatitude has, himself, been assured by Arún Pasha that the Sultan is giving his most serious attention to the question, that a special Commission, uncontrolled by the Porte and under the presidency of Turkan Pasha, is to sit immediately and deal with all the points raised by the Patriarch, and that they have already obtained lists of the imprisoned Armenians and of the Armenian schools, churches, &c., which were destroyed during the recent disturbances, with a view to coming to some conclusion with regard to them.

Mgr. Ormanian has thus been persuaded to withdraw his resignation, at least until the presentation of the expected Report of the Commission, but in doing so he has repeated that unless the arbitrary proceedings of the Minister of Police are summarily checked, he will be unable to continue to discharge his duties as Patriarch.

I have, &c.
(For the Ambassador),
(Signed) M. DE BUNSEN.

No. 42.

Armenian Relief Committee to Foreign Office.—(Received October 27.)

Grosvenor House, London, October 23, 1899.

Sir,

I AM directed by the Duke of Westminster to beg that you will be so good as to submit to the Marquis of Salisbury, as the only action seems to be found expedient for the release of eight Armenian prisoners at Mardin, who are understood to have been arrested here for murderous acts, that they were discovered to have acted in the distribution of relief sent from England and America to distressed Armenians in the neighbourhood of Mardin. The case, however, is to be tried; but on application has been refused for a grant to provide food for those whilst detained in prison, and it appears to the Governor-General of Diarbekir that, in order to facilitate the sanctioning a grant of money, it would be advisable to make pre-arrangements for Her Majesty's Ambassador at the Porte, in the hope of securing the release of the men who, it seems, have not been reported by Sir William Whittall, who is interested in the prisoners, and would be able to furnish details to Her Majesty's Embassy if requested to do so.

I am, &c.
(Signed) EDWARD ATKIN,
Acting Honorary Secretary.

No. 43.

The Marquess of Salisbury to Sir N. O'Conor.

(No. 258.) *Foreign Office, October 27, 1899.*

Sir,

I TRANSMIT to your Excellency herewith copy of a letter from the Armenian Relief Committee, asking that steps may be taken to obtain the release of eight Armenian prisoners at Mardin, and stating that details of the circumstances could be furnished by Sir William Whittall.

I request your Excellency to take such action in this matter as may appear to you to be proper.

I am, &c.
(Signed) SALISBURY.

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* No. 42.

No. 44.

Sir N. O'Conor to the Marquess of Salisbury.—(Received October 28.)

(No. 490.) *Constantinople, October 22, 1899.*

My Lord,

WITH reference to my immediately preceding despatch of the 19th instant, I have the honour to transmit copy of a despatch from Her Majesty's Consul at Smyrna and its inclosure, giving an account of the extent of the ravages of the earthquake and of the relief measures undertaken by the Anglo-American Relief Committee.

It will be seen that the intensity of the distress was not exaggerated in the first reports that came to hand, and that some 20,000 houses were more or less completely destroyed. It is more especially with a view to providing shelter for the houseless that subscriptions are required, and Mr. Cumberbatch expresses a hope that I may be authorized to join my colleagues in contributing to the relief fund, as the French, German, Austrian, and Italian Ambassadors, and some of the Ministers, have already done. Mr. Cumberbatch further suggests the opening of a subscription in England, and that I should write to the leading newspapers on the subject. He adds that a Committee is already being formed in England for collecting funds, and that some of the banks will be asked to receive the money subscribed.

On the question of the 4 per cent. surtax raised by the Sublime Porte in the *note-verbale*, of which a copy was inclosed in my despatch No. 471 of the 11th instant, I have had conversations with most of my colleagues. I gather that most of them have received authority to accept the demand, provided their colleagues are equally empowered to do so, but they look to me as representing the Power most interested in the matter.

My feeling at present is that we should occupy an invidious position if England alone withheld her consent. But I do not wish to pronounce definitely on the subject till I receive the official Report which I have requested Mr. Consul Cumberbatch to draw up in concert with his colleagues at Smyrna.

From private communications already received from that place, I gather that locally there is strong objection to the measure. It is felt that Smyrna has already contributed voluntarily to the full extent of its means, that it is contrary to reason that a province so severely afflicted should be made to suffer still more by being more heavily taxed than the rest of the Empire, and by seeing its import trade diverted to other countries. It is possible that these considerations, when presented to the foreign Representatives by their Consuls, may induce some of the former to oppose the Turkish proposal. I will not speculate on the course which it may then be right for this Embassy to pursue, beyond suggesting that it would be well to avoid the odium of standing alone in opposition to an exceptional measure for the relief of a destitute Mussulman population.

I do not at present think that British trade would be very appreciably affected by the increased duty. It may be shown by the figures, which I should shortly receive from Smyrna, that a surtax of 1½ or 2 per cent. would supply a sufficient fund; and in this case it may be advisable to accept the proposal with this limitation; but on this and the other points raised, I shall have the honour to report further to your Lordship when I receive Mr. Cumberbatch's official Report.

It would guide me in the deliberations with my colleagues if I knew whether Her Majesty's Government have any objection in principle to the proposal made by the Imperial Ottoman Government, who have to-day asked for an answer to their note of the 5th October.

I have, &c.
(Signed) N. R. O'CONOR.

Inclosure 1 in No. 44.

Consul Cumberbatch to Sir N. O'Conor.

(No. 68.) *Smyrna, October 18, 1899.*

Sir,

WITH reference to Mr. Vice-Consul Hampson's despatch No. 65 of the 25th ultimo, on the subject of the distress caused by the recent earthquakes in this district, I have

PUBLIC RECORD OFFICE, LONDON

the honour to forward herewith extracts from the latest Report of Mr. Edward Whittall, one of the members of the local British Relief Committee for the distribution of the funds in their hands.

From this it will be seen that the first estimates as to the damage done and lives lost were far from exaggerated. The number of dwelling places demolished by the shocks have been found to be quite 20,000, of which about 16,000 have to be entirely rebuilt, the remainder needing considerable repairs to make them inhabitable.

It is calculated that the average cost per dwelling will be 50*s.*, making a total of at least 40,000*l.* required for rebuilding purposes alone.

The sums needed for the distribution of food and clothing are not great, but medicines are urgently needed owing to the great amount of sickness from exposure.

The number of killed is still fixed at 1,000, though not more than 700 deaths have been established, the bodies of the remainder being presumably still under the heaps of ruins, which have not been all cleared away yet. In fact, it is this necessary preliminary work which retards the labours of the Relief Committees as much as anything else.

The British Relief Committee have already provided shelter for 200 persons, and we hope to go on at the rate of fifty more per diem, now that the work is organized; but this can only be done provided that funds are forthcoming, the sum at our disposal at present being under 1,000*l.*

About twenty patients are being attended to at the British Seamen's Hospital in Smyrna, and several more are distributed among the other hospitals.

It may interest Her Majesty's Government to know that the German, French, and Austrian Governments have sent contributions of 150*l.*, 40*l.*, and 80*l.* respectively, and in sending all these details to your Excellency I venture to hope that you may see your way to recommending a similar contribution on the part of Her Majesty's Government to the funds of the British Relief Committee instituted at Smyrna, of which I have been asked since my return to become a member, in order to assist the three other members in their arduous labours.

In this capacity I propose to visit the distressed localities on Saturday next.

In conclusion, I beg to state that Sir W. Whittall, of Constantinople, who is kept fully informed of the urgent requirements of the unfortunate people, and of the doings of the British Committee, has kindly consented to help in every way he can, and it has been suggested to our Committee that if your Excellency, after reading the inclosed Report and hearing the Report of Colonel Ponsonby, Military Attaché to Her Majesty's Embassy, who visited the affected district, would sign an appeal to the editor of the "Times" and other leading London papers, or submit to Her Majesty's Secretary of State the desirability of publishing this despatch in the papers, it would be insuring a certain response from the British public, which has already begun to show its interest in the sufferers by the remittance of contributions to this Consulate.

Arrangements are also being made for the formation of a Committee of gentlemen in London to assist in the matter, and a bank in England will be asked to receive contributions.

The five photographs herewith annexed depict sufficiently the effects of the shocks.

I have, &c.
(Signed) H. A. CUMBERBATCH.

P.S.—I hear that the Italian Government have contributed 40*l.*, and that the Russian Government contemplate sending a subscription too.

H. A. C.

Inclosure 2 in No. 44.

Report by Mr. E. Whittall.

(Extract.)

AS I wrote in my former letter, my estimate of 80,000 to 100,000 souls without a roof to cover them is proving, if anything, under the mark. The two cazas of Seraikeui and Denizli alone figure at 45,000, and we have to add to same Bosdogan, Caradjasu, Ortakchè, Nozli, Kiosk, and Aidin. The last three are not so badly off, as the houses were comparatively well built.

The killed are variously estimated at 1,000 to 2,000, the first figure being probably the safest to take. The wounded, roughly speaking, number 1,000, of whom about 200 are very seriously injured. Of the eighteen brought down to the British Seamen's Hospital one has died, and one or two are dangerously ill. The rest are doing better than the doctor expected.

The destruction caused by the earthquake was so rapid that if it had occurred in winter the lives lost would have been counted by thousands. The greater part of the population, by good luck, was camping out in fig garden, field, and vineyard under temporary shelter of bushes, and thus escaped.

There remain still many villages and hamlets to be reported on, but I still believe a fair estimate of the loss of property would be 15,000 dwellings levelled to the ground, and 5,000 so damaged as to be quite unsafe to live in.

Of these 20,000 about 15,000 belong to the poorest class of peasants (already pinched by two years of crop failures), who may help with their hands, but positively cannot do anything else towards placing a roof over their heads.

As regards clothes and covering, being an agricultural population, they are fairly well provided for, their wants, as you well know, being very limited. Only in Serakeui, where fire added its terrors to the earthquake, some families lost everything they had.

Food is not wanting, except in the larger centres, where people were accustomed to buy their bread from the baker, and did not keep back a certain portion of their crops to supply their household requirements.

In fact, the Anglo-American Relief Fund will almost entirely be spent on building up fairly good rooms for the poor, and the work is proceeding merrily, and if England helps us, we may be able to save many hundreds of poor people from immense suffering, disease, and death.

Now let me give you the, perhaps, more interesting details of my trip of inspection.

Serakeui and Denizli and the villages around are the most battered of all. I have seen the result of many an earthquake shock, but never anything like this. One would say that cannon had been used to level the towns. The two inclosed photographs will give you a very fair idea of the damage done. In fact, nothing remains but a heap of ruins. As to the inhabitants, they are simply dazed, living under trees or hastily erected shelters of reeds, old coverings, &c., with here and there a military tent standing out in relief. In the general misery they have forgotten to mourn their dead, and even the sick and wounded were not spoken of.

Each one seemed to occupy himself more about his neighbour's troubles than his own. I have never seen anything like this before, the Greek pointing to the Turkish quarter as more worthy of our attention, the Turk to the Greek; in fact, all appearing to take a pride in showing us some worthy object of charity. A Turk hurried me to the side of a terribly injured Greek woman; a Greek pointed out to me the house of a Turkish widow and her miserable attempts to make a shelter for her little ones.

In an open field worked a Greek woman who had some knowledge of surgery, cleaning and binding the wounds of all comers, and a tough job she had to keep time with the numerous demands on her skill.

Such was the motley scene that presented itself before our eyes in Serakeui.

In the villages we met with even a stranger reception.

In the first, called Haskeui, an indescribable heap of ruins, we were received with suspicion, and our help, intended for the poor alone, was almost refused, as the villagers had been told that our instructions were to build for every one, poor and rich alike.

Of course I withdrew, but as I was leaving the poor surrounded me, and informed me that Daili, situated about 2 miles away, was a poorer village, and more worthy of help.

To Daili I went accordingly, and was gratefully received. After settling a *modus operandi* with the villagers, I was preparing to quit when, to my surprise, the Headman came up and said, "You know Chekeli? I must tell you before beginning work that that village beyond the river is poorer than ours, and you had better help them first."

Could you believe in such unselfishness, such honesty? I can assure you I felt a wish to hug the man. Yes, everywhere it was the same disinterestedness I met with, and it made my heart burn to think how little we could do to help the thousands of noble-hearted human creatures, all suffering alike.

During my stay in their midst not one man stretched out his hand to beg for money, not one even spoke of his own wants, always referring to those of his neighbour, perhaps a member of a different creed or race.

These, then, are the exact details of my trip, which ended on Thursday, the 5th October.

Now let me come to what happened after the 5th instant, about which I have heard from our men and from railway officials.

On Sunday the 8th, to cap everything, fresh and very severe earthquake shocks were felt (about forty altogether, of which three very sharp) and the few walls still standing in Denizli were either overthrown or else made more dangerous to the passer-by. An eye-witness at Denizli told me the scene was simply indescribable. It was the market day, and the open space reserved for this purpose was fairly well crowded with villagers trying to sell what they could to keep themselves alive. Amongst the crowd a string of over a dozen camels were waiting to be loaded. These poor animals frightened by the earth tremor, stampeded, overturning everything in their way, and added to the horror of the scene. As you well know, animals seem to feel more than human beings in such cases, and a chorus of dogs' howls and donkeys' brays were joined to the sounds of falling walls and houses.

On Monday, the 9th instant, further shocks were felt and heavy and general rain, lasting for two days, came to make the position of the population still more intolerable.

A correspondent writes me, "You know how damp Denizli is even without rain; just fancy what it is with rain. It almost brought tears to my eyes to see poor women and children trying to dry their bedding and clothes the moment the sun peeped out, and their dull despair when rain commenced again."

Sickness and fever have appeared and, I am afraid, will shortly add many more graves to the rows of those that were killed during the earthquake.

As the Headman of Daili replied to me when I asked whether sixteen freshly-made mounds in their cemetery represented the number of killed of Daili: "Yes, Chelebi, they are at rest. Let us talk of those who have still to suffer."

I intended forwarding this letter on Saturday, the 14th October, but was not in time for the mail. On Sunday I went up with Mr. Gordon, my Commissioner, to see how the relief work in general was getting on. I am grieved to say that matters are going from bad to worse. (This refers to the Turkish Commission.) The work of putting up shelters for the sufferers is proceeding but slowly, the Turkish officials showing utter want of goodwill or incapacity. The only exception is the Mutessarif of Denizli, who is doing his best, but is not backed up by his understrappers. Illness is general, especially fever. There are few families that have not one at least of their members down with something or other.

The damage is very great indeed.

Our work is, I am glad to say, getting on famously. We have housed about 200 souls, and from this day forward we will be able to place under cover fifty per diem.

If money comes in we could increase to any amount almost our building operations. The cost will be about 10*s.* per head, and it will be sound good work.

I am afraid our success is causing more resentment than emulation in the breasts of the other established Commissioners of Relief, who are frittering away the funds at their disposal.

I only hope friends will not delay the money they intend giving, as every moment is precious now, and we do not like to increase our relief works until we know what we shall have to spend.

Smyrna, October 17, 1899.

No. 45.

Sir N. O'Conor to the Marquess of Salisbury.—(*Received October* 30.)

(No. 495.)

My Lord, *Therapia, October* 25, 1899.

THE promises of a speedy redress of Armenian grievances by which, as I had the honour to report to your Lordship in my despatch No. 483, Confidential, of the 12th instant, the Gregorian Armenian Patriarch had been induced to temporarily

withdraw his threatened resignation, have been given tangible shape in an Imperial Iradé which was officially communicated to his Beatitude on the 17th instant.

The Iradé, a summary of which appeared in the "Times" of the 11th instant, sanctions the following five recommendations of the Special Commissioners on Armenian reforms:—

1. Abolition of the vexatious measures adopted by the Ministry of Police against Armenian travellers, merchants, artisans, and others arriving in Constantinople from abroad or from the provinces, provided they are of proved respectability. Persons compromised in the recent disturbances are excepted from this provision.

2. Authorization to rebuild the churches, monasteries, schools, and other buildings destroyed during the disturbances. The authorities will provide wood for the purpose from the State forests and stones from the State quarries.

3. Payment of sums due by the Government to artisans and others who were sent to the provinces, or who were killed in the disturbances (the payment in the latter case being presumably to the relatives of the deceased).

4. Authorization to build a large orphanage at Seven Towers, in Stamboul, provided another site than that proposed by the Patriarchate can be found.

5. Amnesty of fifty-four Armenians condemned and imprisoned for political offences. The sentence of death passed on twenty-four Armenians to be commuted.

The Patriarch has now definitely withdrawn his resignation, a step which may be supposed to indicate that his Beatitude recognizes the terms of the Imperial Edict to afford the Armenians some hope of substantial relief. The practical value of the measure will, of course, depend wholly on the spirit in which its provisions are carried into effect, and while I understand that the Patriarch does not take a very hopeful view, it is satisfactory to hear that some thirty-seven persons at Tokat and about forty at Bitlis, who have been in prison since the Armenian disturbances, have now been released.

I have, &c.
(Signed) N. R. O'CONOR.

No. 46.

Sir N. O'Conor to the Marquess of Salisbury.—(*Received November* 6.)

(No. 504. Confidential.)

My Lord, *Therapia, October* 31, 1899.

WITH reference to my despatch No. 495 of the 25th instant, I have the honour to transmit to your Lordship herewith copy of a Memorandum communicated to me in confidence by the Armenian Patriarch, giving some particulars connected with the recently issued Iradé on the Armenian grievances, and stating the position taken by his Beatitude in the matter.

Mgr. Ormanian does not, he explains, cherish any illusions as to the intrinsic value of the measure. But he sees in it some indication of a willingness on the part of the Sultan to alleviate the situation; and he adds that certain steps have already been taken towards the fulfilment of this purpose. His Beatitude thinks it his duty to remain at his post so long as there is any hope that by doing so he can assist towards the development of such a policy; but should it once become clear that the latest Imperial promises are—like former ones—to remain a dead letter, he declares that he will refuse any longer to exercise his functions.

I have, &c.
(Signed) N. R. O'CONOR.

Inclosure in No. 46.

Memorandum.

Détails sur le dernier Iradé concernant les Arméniens et sur le Télégramme officieux du 11 Octobre, 1899.

(Confidentiel.)

1. ABOLITION des mesures extraordinaires contre la circulation des Arméniens:

D'abord les mesures extraordinaires ne visaient pas la circulation dans les provinces, mais simplement les relations avec la capitale. Aucun Arménien pour

quelque motif que ce soit ne pouvait se rendre à Constantinople ni partir de cette ville. Les exceptions étaient très rares, et l'on n'y réussissait que grâce à quelque subterfuge ou à quelque protection puissante. Ceux qui arrivaient à Constantinople étaient conduits directement à la police sans exception, ou déroués pour un temps indéterminé. Maintenant on ne doit plus les conduire à la police ni à la prison pour y faire de longues constatations; les formalités seront remplies aux débarcadères et aux gares. Les négociants et les artisans doivent obtenir la permission de venir, mais les négociants ne l'auront qu'après la constatation de leur crédit et les artisans qu'au prorata des besoins de la capitale, prorata à fixer par la Préfecture de la ville. Quant aux ouvriers et aux domestiques et à ceux qui voyagent pour des motifs personnels, il n'en est pas question.

2. Reconstruction ou réparation avec l'aide de l'État des églises, écoles, et monastères détruits pendant les troubles:

Cette mesure a été demandée par le Patriarche dès le début mais elle a été toujours rejetée sous le prétexte qu'il fallait spécifier les emplacements ainsi que les détails y relatifs. On a présenté alors une première liste de dix-sept églises, mais pour une seule (Ourfa) on a pu récemment obtenir le Firman. L'Iradé actuel ordonne seulement de faire les démarches et les constatations nécessaires, mais il n'en est question ni de Firman ni de l'aide de l'État pour les reconstructions.

3. Payement des sommes dues aux employés du Gouvernement tués ou expulsés:

Depuis trois ans une Commission Spéciale siégeant au Patriarcat s'occupe des créances des Arméniens tués ou expulsés, commerçants, artisans, ouvriers, domestiques, &c.; elle s'est mise en relation soit avec le Gouvernement, soit avec les Compagnies et les particuliers. Divers Départements de l'État ont fait droit à ces réclamations et ils payent des à comptes hebdomadaires. La Liste Civile seule refuse d'entendre raison. Le Patriarche avait fait à cet effet des démarches dont le résultat n'est pas indiqué ou connu jusqu'à ce jour.

4. Construction d'un orphelinat à Yedi Koulé, près de Constantinople:

La communauté possède des terrains près de son grand hôpital, et c'est sur une partie de ces terrains qu'on veut construire l'orphelinat. L'Iradé n'accorde pas l'autorisation, sous prétexte que le terrain est Vacouf-i-Soultani. On promet seulement de donner l'autorisation quand on présentera un autre emplacement convenable; mais il s'agit de savoir si la communauté a les moyens et les facilités pour acheter un nouveau terrain convenable et suffisant.

5. La grâce de cinquante-quatre condamnés et la commutation de la peine de mort en détention perpétuelle pour les autres:

Le Patriarche avait demandé la grâce de 120 personnes dont l'amnistie générale du Décembre 1896 avait commué la peine de mort en détention provisoire. Sur ces 120 personnes dix seulement sont graciées cette fois, celles qui se trouvent dans la prison de Kharpout et appartiennent à la ville d'Arabkir. Les autres graciés sont: un de Sivas, un de Trébizonde, et trente-neuf de Van. Tous condamnés pendant ces derniers deux ans à des emprisonnements temporaires. Deux autres graciés seraient, à ce qu'on dit, deux vieillards de Constantinople condamnés à cinq ans de prison pour délit commun, et qui ont purgé déjà la moitié de leurs peines. Avec ces deux derniers, le total serait cinquante-trois et non cinquante-quatre. En même temps il y a eu la grâce pour les trente-deux Turcs impliqués dans les massacres de Tokat en 1897. On prétend qu'on a commué la peine de mort de vingt-quatre Arméniens condamnés dans les derniers deux ans; mais la communication du Ministre de la Justice n'en dit rien.

Le Patriarche ne se fait pas d'illusion sur la valeur réelle de l'Iradé, et il a exposé explicitement ses vues dans ses visites au Palais et à la Porte. Néanmoins, comme il y a un commencement d'exécution et des signes de vouloir adoucir la situation, il croit devoir rester à sa place et coopérer autant que cela lui est possible au développement de ces bons symptômes, lesquels pourraient rester tout à fait infructueux s'ils n'étaient soigneusement entretenus. Si au contraire cette nouvelle reprise de démonstrations bienveillantes n'aboutit pas, et si les promesses restent lettres mortes, il déclare de ne pouvoir plus continuer ses fonctions et de se soustraire définitivement à toute responsabilité.

La question à l'ordre du jour, celle qui a motivé la démission du Patriarche, c'est

les difficultés suscitées contre les voyages des Arméniens, et à cet égard le Patriarche a ses principes nettement établis. Si les Arméniens, dit-il, sont des sujets de l'Empire comme les autres, on ne doit pas user de mesures exceptionnelles à leur égard; si au contraire ils sont mis hors la loi et sont considérés comme des suspects et des prévenus, il n'admet point dans ce cas être leur chef ni leur représentant près le Gouvernement qui les renie.

No. 47.

Sir N. O'Conor to the Marquess of Salisbury.—(*Received November* 13.)

(No. 510.)
My Lord, *Therapia, November* 5, 1899.

WITH reference to my despatch No. 437 of the 13th ultimo, and to previous correspondence on the subject, I have the honour to transmit to your Lordship copy of a despatch from Her Majesty's Consul at Damascus, reporting progress in the matter of the election of an Orthodox Patriarch of Antioch.

Mr. Richards states that a list of candidates for the Patriarchal Throne having been returned to the Synod by the Porte with the direction that the name of the Bishop of Akkar, a recent adherent of the Syrian, or "National" faction, should be struck out, this faction retorted by once more electing Mgr. Malatios, the native Prelate, whose deposition, as your Lordship will recollect, had been ordered by the Imperial Government.

It seems, therefore, that up to the present the party under Russian patronage is standing firm in its opposition to the wishes of the Porte.

I have, &c.
(Signed) N. R. O'CONOR.

Inclosure in No. 47.

Consul Richards to Sir N. O'Conor.

(No. 57.)
Sir, *Damascus, October* 21, 1899.

WITH reference to Acting Consul Crow's despatch No. 49 of the 4th September, I have the honour to inform your Excellency that some progress has been made recently in the matter of the election of the Greek Orthodox Patriarch.

Some four or five days ago the list of candidates for the Patriarchal Throne, the submission of which to the Porte I reported in a previous despatch, was returned to the Synod, with the injunction that a fresh election should take place with the express proviso that the Bishop of Akkar's name should be removed from the list of candidates. The reason of this exclusion would appear to be the fact that this Bishop, though by birth a Greek, and therefore a member of that party, had recently, for personal reasons, given in his adherence to the "Syrian" or "National" faction.

On the receipt of this order the Syrian members of the Synod met and unanimously elected Mgr. Malatios to the vacant throne.

I understand that their report of proceedings was sent to the Vali (who is now at Homs) yesterday, for transmission to the Porte, but, for some reason or other, this is not admitted, officially, to be the case.

I have, &c.
(Signed) W. S. RICHARDS.

No. 48.

Sir N. O'Conor to the Marquess of Salisbury.—(*Received November* 13.)

(No. 512.)
My Lord, *Therapia, November* 5, 1899.

I HAVE the honour to transmit herewith copy of a despatch addressed to me from Kharput by Her Majesty's Vice-Consul at Diarbekir, reporting the arrival at the latter place of a Commission to investigate the complaints brought against the Hamidieh troops in that vilayet.

Speaking of the injury caused to the country by the enrolment of these troops

Mr. Jones states that for some time past the complaints to which their proceedings have given rise have not been confined to the Christian population of the district.

On my communicating Mr. Jones' despatch unofficially to the Grand Vizier, his Highness stated that though he much deplored the state of things described he was powerless to control the Hamidieh troops; and that Zekki Pasha, who with Shakir Pasha had been originally the chief advocate of their enrolment, now sincerely regretted it. There is no doubt that these troops are a source of danger and permanent disorder, and that the Government dare not suppress them without the support of the regular army.

I have, &c.
(Signed) N. R. O'CONOR.

Inclosure in No. 48.

Vice-Consul Jones to Sir N. O'Conor.

(No. 32.)
Sir, *Kharput, October* 18, 1899.

I HAVE the honour to report that according to information received from Diarbekir four Inspectors ("Mufettish") arrived in that city two weeks ago to inquire into the complaints brought against the Hamidieh troops.

For some time past these complaints have been widespread, and have not been confined to the rayah population of that province. Not long ago the Acting Kaimakam of Djezireh, in the district ("Mutessarifflik") of Mardin, fled from his post because all power had been taken out of his hands by the Hamidieh officers stationed there.

In this connection I may mention that on the occasion of my visit to Mardin I was informed by a native Christian landowner that his properties in the plain south of that city, which in years previous to the enrolment of these Hamidieh troops had yielded him sometimes as much as £T. 400 per annum, and in the most unfavourable years never less than £T. 150, now bring in nothing at all. The complaint of a Mahommedan official to the effect that the whole of that plain might as well be called Hamidiehland, as the police had no power there whatsoever, was even more significant of the state of feeling that prevails among the law-abiding population with regard to the havoc wrought by these troops.

I have the honour to add that of these Inspectors, to receive whom his Excellency the Vali hurried back to Diarbekir, where he arrived on the 7th instant, one is a General of Brigade ("Liwa"), the second a Colonel ("Miralai"), the third a Commissioner of Police, and the fourth an official sent from the Ministry of the Interior.

I have, &c.
(Signed) J. FRANCIS JONES.

No. 49.

Sir N. O'Conor to the Marquess of Salisbury.—(Received November 13.)

(No. 518.)
My Lord, *Therapia, November* 6, 1899.

I HAVE the honour to report that I am in receipt of a telegram from Her Majesty's Vice-Consul at Van, stating that the Mutessarif of Bashkaleh intends to proceed with a battalion of troops to Tiari and other independent districts with the object of collecting tribute, a proceeding, Major Maunsell adds, which will certainly provoke resistance and lead to bloodshed.

On inquiry at the Porte I was informed by the Grand Vizier that he was aware of the Mutessarif's intention. His Excellency said that he was alive to the necessity of avoiding bloodshed but he did not apprehend that any resistance would be offered to the expedition.

I have, &c.
(Signed) N. R. O'CONOR.

No. 50.

Sir N. O'Conor to the Marquess of Salisbury.—(Received November 13.)

(No. 519.)
My Lord, *Constantinople, November* 8, 1899.

IN the interesting despatch, of which I have the honour to inclose a copy, Her Majesty's Vice-Consul at Van gives an account of the general condition of affairs in his district.

Van itself has been perfectly quiet and free from revolutionary disturbances during the summer, and Major Maunsell states that the Armenian inhabitants have turned their attention entirely to the revival of commerce and the rebuilding of their houses, and that an excellent effect has been produced by a recent Imperial Order releasing a batch of thirty-three Armenian political prisoners.

The price of bread, however, remains high, and relief will again be necessary in the form of seed.

Along the Persian frontier there have been raids by Kurdish tribes against the inhabitants on the Turkish side of the border, the chief culprits being a Haideranli Chief and the Khan of Maku Azerbeijan, both of whom are said to be completely in Russian hands, and to be at the control of any Persian authority.

Major Maunsell gives a discouraging account of the state of the Nestorians on the Turkish side. Their Patriarch, Mar Shimun, is described as a feeble and apathetic Prelate, who is content to see his people enticed into the Russian fold without making an effort to keep them in hand; while his brother, Nimrud, is actively engaged in supporting the Russian propaganda. Her Majesty's Vice-Consul pointed out to Mar Shimun that the Ottoman authorities would assuredly resent a wholesale conversion of Turkish Nestorians to the Russian Church, and that their position would be rendered very dangerous if they allowed themselves to be tampered with by the Russian agents who are preparing to cross the frontier. The Patriarch showed little desire to avert the evil.

It is evident from Major Maunsell's report that the Russians are employing every means to gain influence and strengthen their position in the Nestorian country on both sides of the border, and it is to be feared that this tendency will be found to increase so long as the Turkish Government continues to make life intolerable for the Christian communities in those regions by leaving them unprotected against the assaults of the Kurds and the rapacity of the tax-gatherer. Among the most active of the Russian Agents is a certain Kasha (priest) Tuma of Ashitha in the Tiari district of the Hakkiari, and I have thought it right to cause the Grand Vizier to be informed unofficially of his proceedings as reported to me by Her Majesty's Vice-Consul.

I have, &c.
(Signed) N. R. O'CONOR.

Inclosure in No. 50.

Major Maunsell to Sir N. O'Conor.

(No. 10.)
Sir, *Van, October* 24, 1899.

I HAVE the honour to forward the following general report on the condition of affairs in this vilayet.

In the northern Kaza of Arjish, the collection of taxes from the Armenian villages directly by Government officials and not by farming them to Hussein Pasha, is being carried out successfully. Recently, a slight affray took place between some of the protecting zaptiehs and Hussein Pasha's men, in which two of the latter were killed.

The Vali's orders are very definite on this point, and zaptiehs and officials in any part of the vilayet when dealing with Kurds and brigands are instructed not to hesitate to shoot if necessary.

This has had a most salutary effect in keeping order.

Hussein Pasha has complained to Zekki Pasha, but so far the Vali's action has been upheld.

Husni Pasha, the Military Commandant here and practically the representative of Zekki Pasha, supports the Vali when troops have to be moved, &c.

Hüssein Pasha has throughout this summer committed no outrages on Christian villages and has chiefly been engaged in intertribal fights.

Jaafer Bey, Chief of the Sheveli Kurds just north of Van, since he was forced to return some cattle raided from the Monastery of Varak in the month of July, has also been quiet.

The Kaza of Malmudie (Serai), close to the Persian frontier, has again been attacked by Persian Kurds who raided a Yezidi village near Serai.

They had also managed to appropriate some Government arms belonging to the Hamidieh on this side of the border.

The chief aggressors are:—

Tahir Khan, with a section of the Haideranli living in Persia.

Multeza Ghuli Khan, the Khan of Maku, with some sections of Jellali Kurds, a tribe also divided between Turkey and Persia.

Also some sections of Shekak Kurds from the south.

The Khan of Maku has been educated in Russia and is completely Russianized. He is reputed to be very rich.

Tahir Khan is also completely in Russian hands.

These Chiefs practically represent the sole Government of the region round Maku and the extreme north-west corner of Azerbaijan, and the Persian authority is really non-existent.

The Kaimakam of Serai took vigorous action on the occasion of this last attack, a fortnight ago, moved troops out of Serai and collected Hamidieh from the four neighbouring tribes.

Ultimately, however, by threats of a return raid into Persia, and also by appropriating some sheep [illegible] to Haideranli on the Persian border, Tahir Khan was induced to restore the property raided from the Yezidi and also the Government arms.

Sherif Bey, on the Bashkala frontier, has been quiet since the attack by revolutionists on him last July.

Throughout the summer the town of Van has been perfectly quiet and free from revolutionary disturbance, the Armenians turning their attention entirely to the revival of commerce and the rebuilding of houses burnt during the late disturbances.

The upper part of the main avenue of Van, most of the houses of which were burnt, has now almost entirely been rebuilt. The large Monastery of Dere Kilisse, in the gardens, has also been rebuilt.

Two days ago, by imperial order, thirty-three Armenians, political prisoners from the late disturbances sentenced to various terms of penal servitude, have been released. This has had an excellent effect in the town.

Unfortunately the entire want of rain during the summer, and a harvest rather below the average in consequence, has resulted in the price of bread remaining very high, and in some parts of the vilayet seed relief will again be necessary this winter.

I recently visited Bashkala and Kochannes, the residence of Mar Shimun, the Nestorian Patriarch.

I heard that the Rev. Mr. Heazell intended to go to Tiari for the winter, and anticipating that there might be difficulties in the way of this scheme I thought it best to go and study the question on the spot.

Lieutenant-Colonel Massey, on a visit from Erzeroum, accompanied me.

The attempts by the Pères de France and the Catholic priests here to convert the Nestorians seem to have lapsed entirely this year, owing to want of funds. Nimrud, Mar Shimun's brother, who had chiefly supported this movement, seems now to be inclined to intrigue with the Russian party.

He is a most dangerous intriguer and a man of considerable address and cleverness, and will no doubt eventually bring his compatriots into trouble with the Turkish authorities.

He constantly spreads groundless rumours to discredit Mar Shimun with the Government. For instance, while visiting Van in the spring he tried to induce the Vali to believe that Mar Shimun was intriguing to bring over the Russian priests.

The Mutessarif of Bashkala has been completely won over by him, and on recently passing through Kochannes he refused entirely to see Mar Shimun, and would only meet Nimrud.

As the former is the proper constituted and recognized Head of the Nestorians, this was, I think, a very short-sighted policy on the part of the Governor of Bashkala.

I had a long interview with Mar Shimun in which I endeavoured to impress on him that, owing to the wholesale conversion by the Russian priests at Urmia, a crisis was

approaching in the history of his people and their religion, and it was most necessary for him to bestir himself, and take a more active interest in affairs if he wished to preserve both.

I impressed on him that if the Russian proselytes came over this side of the border, and people here became converted in any numbers, the Turkish Government would become seriously disturbed at what they would call hostile community suddenly created in their midst, ready, perhaps, to attack their military positions in rear, and might take reprisals in the form of a massacre either partial or complete.

I asked him if he thought that many of his people would be likely to come over to the Russian Church if pressed, but, of course, I obtained no direct answer, but from his looks I judged he thought very many of them might if the opportunity offered.

He complained that the Turkish Government had permitted the Kurds to raid numerous villages this summer and commit excesses unpunished, also that his salary from the Government was in arrear, and some minor points about zaptiehs being supplied to Kochannes, &c. I thereupon urged on him the necessity of visiting the Vali in Van, the Representative of the Ottoman Government, where by personal intercourse he would be able to do a great deal, and would be sure of a favourable reception. On my return I promised to explain matters to the Vali and pave the way for his arrival. Also, should disturbances eventually arise owing to Russian advances, the Government would scarcely be able to accuse him of complicity, as he could point to the fact of his visit to Van as a proof of his desire to claim support from Government. He gave me a half-hearted promise that he would come, which, up to the present, he has not fulfilled, possibly owing to the break in the weather and the approach of winter.

Mar Shimun is now a fairly old man, and appears to me to be thoroughly apathetic and likely to hold his hands, and simply wait for whatever events may turn up without attempting much to change the course of them.

The Russian power is tangible and close to him, and I should think he is just as likely as any of his Urmia people to run to it for protection, friendly or otherwise, if occasion offered.

There is a certain Kasha (priest) Tuma of Ashitha, in Tiari, who for some twenty-five years has been inducing Tiari people to look to the coming of the Russians and disregard Mar Shimun's authority. He has for some time past been in Russia and is practically a Russian agent now. He proposes to return to Tiari this winter bringing with him several boxes of presents, &c. The Russian priests in Urmia asked the Turkish Consul in Tabriz to give him a passport, which was refused, and he now intends to cross secretly at some point of the frontier.

If this man reaches Tiari, his arrival will certainly have a most dangerous effect on the ignorant people there. I have warned the Vali of the danger of the man's appearing there, and he promises to have the frontier carefully watched. There seems to be conclusive evidence that Nimrud has been endeavouring to pass this man across the frontier, and has sent some of his servants to Diza for the purpose.

Mr. Browne and Mr. Heazell finally left for Tiari, but I received a telegram yesterday from the former saying that he had been robbed of all his baggage by a celebrated Nestorian brigand, a "Malik," or Headman, of Tkhuh district, called Baboo.

I at once went to the Vali, who telegraphed to Julamerk for zaptiehs and assistance to be sent to recapture Mr. Browne's effects.

Mr. Browne seems to have continued his route to Tiari.

He mentions in the telegram that this attack is without doubt by Nimrud's instigation, which is most probable, as he has done everything to prevent their mission to Tiari.

Seeing the amount of mischief this man has already done and seems likely to do, I would submit to your Excellency the advisability of having him exiled or temporarily removed from Kochannes.

A few days ago a telegram reached me from Diza from Mr. McCoan, an American missionary from Urmia, who stated he wished to tour in the Nestorian country but was stopped by the Government. He asked my advice, and I suggested that it would be better if he came to Van, where he could confer directly with the Vali, explain exactly where he wished to go, &c., and also be in more direct communication with the United States' Consul in Erzeroum and his Minister in Constantinople.

With reference to my despatch No. 37 of the 10th September, I now find that M. Maetsky, the Russian Vice-Consul here, did not actually visit Kochannes, but turned off through the mountains to the westward.

This year there have been a certain amount of raids on Nestorian villages, and

lifting of cattle, chiefly by the Uramar Kurds, on the east side of the Nestorian country.

They have not been, however, so serious as the attack on Lewin last year.

On inquiry, I find many of the raids are owing to the attacks by Nestorians of Tiari on the Uramar men; in fact, it is difficult to say who began it. I have asked Mr. Browne and Mr. Heazell to try and explain to the Tiari men the great mischief done by stirring up these raids.

Tiari is separated from Uramar by the mountain district of Diz, so the Uramar Kurds revenged themselves on the latter, which they found defenceless, the worst outrage being an attack on Cusin village, in Diz, where eleven men were killed.

The Bashkala Government are inquiring into the matter.

On the north side of Tiari the relations of the people this year with Hajji Agha, Chief of the Hartoshi Kurds, have been friendly, and no serious outrages have been committed.

I have recently also paid a visit to the Caza of Shattakh, a large district south of Van.

It has a very energetic Kaimakam, well liked by both Christians and Moslems.

A number of nomads, chiefly the large Miran tribe under Mustapha Pasha, a Hamidieh officer, occupying in summer the hills round this Caza.

This year Mustapha Pasha has been particularly quiet, and no outrages have occurred.

This, the Kaimakam assures me, is due to special instructions received from Zekki Pasha.

Recently the Kaimakam flocked the Khalikan Kurd tribe in the Bohtan Valley below Shattakh, who have long refused to pay taxes, and who have committed many outrages.

He removed the greater part of their cattle and sheep as payment for arrears of taxes due, and has now reduced them to complete submission.

The Cazas of Kawash and Karaulkan, south of the lake, have been free from outrage this summer, the only difficulty being the poverty of the people in these mountain districts.

I have, &c.
(Signed) F. R. MAUNSELL.

No. 51.

Sir N. O'Conor to the Marquess of Salisbury.—(Received November 13.)

(No. 521.)
My Lord, *Therapia, November 8, 1899.*

I HAVE the honour to acknowledge the receipt of your Lordship's despatch No. 238 of the 27th ultimo, respecting eight Armenians stated by the Armenian Relief Committee to have been arrested at Mardin for no offence except that they were discovered to have assisted in the distribution to their distressed countrymen of relief contributed from England and America.

The case of these men had already been brought to my notice by Her Majesty's Vice-Consul at Diarbekir, who reported that they were in gaol awaiting trial on what seemed to be frivolous charges, their real offence in the Vali's eyes being doubtless that they had been connected with the distribution of relief.

On receipt of Mr Jones' despatch I took an opportunity to speak very strongly to the Grand Vizier, pointing out that the fact that eight relief agents had been arrested by the Vali's orders afforded strong presumption that Mr. Jones' explanation of the reasons for their imprisonment was correct, the only alternative supposition being that the Vali was effecting arrests on a wholesale scale which there seemed to be nothing in the situation at Mardin to warrant. I warned His Highness that I might be constrained to let it be publicly known that the Vali was persecuting those who had distributed relief, and I pointed out the deplorable effect that would be produced if the public were aware that Armenians had been arrested for no other reason than that they had helped in a charitable work which had enjoyed the sanction of the Imperial Government and the co-operation of the local authorities.

His Highness said he could not believe that the Vali had caused the men to be imprisoned without good ground. He promised to call on him for a report as well as for the documents on which the charges were based.

As soon as I learn from Mr. Jones that these documents have been dispatched to Constantinople I shall renew my representations to the Porte, and I shall have the honour to report further to your Lordship in due course.

I have, &c.
(Signed) N. R. O'CONOR.

No. 52.

Sir N. O'Conor to the Marquess of Salisbury.—(Received November 13.)

(No. 526. Confidential.)
My Lord, *Therapia, November 9, 1899.*

REFERRING to my despatch No. 135, Commercial, of the 28th September last and to previous correspondence respecting the Bagdad Railway Concession, I have the honour to report further as follows:—

In the course of conversation last week Tewfik Pasha alluded to the subject and informed me that previous to their departure to study and prospect the proposed route, the German Commission had pressed the Palace and Sublime Porte for an official declaration stating that the Commission was being sent on the grounds of public utility, and that if their conditions were satisfactory they would be given a preferential right for the construction of the railway.

These demands, Tewfik Pasha said, had been refused by the Ministers on the ground that it was advisable to await the proposal of the Commission before binding the Imperial Government, and also because they practically implied a kilometric guarantee which, though small at first, would probably be subsequently increased under official pressure as happened with the Anatolian Railway. The Ministers, he said, were further of opinion that as they had received other proposals which did not involve any kilometric guarantee it would be well to consider them before taking a decision.

A few days after this conversation I heard that neither the Deutsche Bank nor Mr. Siemens, who anticipated great difficulty in raising the money, were in favour of the scheme and that they required an assurance from the German Government that if a Railway Loan were issued it should be directly supported by the See-Handlung Societätsbank figuring on the prospectus. It was only in deference to the insistence of the Emperor of Germany, who took a strong personal interest in the matter, that they had given way and supported the enterprise. Subsequently I heard that Mr. Kühlmann, late of the Oriental Railway Company, endeavoured to come to an arrangement with the Sultan's First Secretary, Tahsin Bey, but apparently without success.

The German Ambassador is at the same time sparing no pains to settle the question satisfactorily. His Excellency has frequent interviews with the Minister of Public Works and high Palace Officials, and is basing his demand on a promise already made by the Sultan which he says cannot now be withdrawn. The Sultan on the other hand argues that his promise was conditional upon the Concession being in the country's interest, and that he now finds that a kilometric guarantee would be equivalent to financial ruin.

Yesterday I received a message from the Turkish Ambassador prior to his departure for London to the effect that the Sultan had decided against the Concession, that the Ottoman Government would construct the railway themselves, and that he was instructed to request your Lordship's good offices in obtaining the assistance of English financial houses for the undertaking.

If my information be correct as to how the question stands at present, and I have no reason to doubt it, I would like to make a few observations.

There is no serious British competitor in the field, and I doubt whether there is any financial group in London who are anxious to obtain the Concession, or who would accept it, if offered, on the terms probably acceptable to the Germans. I cannot consider M. Rechnitzer as a serious competitor, for although he has some financial support I do not think it is of the weight or description likely to carry through a great enterprise of this kind. The main feature of his proposal is the absence of any kilometric guarantee, and this brands it as counterfeit, for it is certain that no one would undertake the work without a solid security of some sort. In any case I have not thought it advisable to give him any support, either at the Palace or at the Porte. At the same time his application has evidently disconcerted

the Germans, and as far as it tends to make them realize the importance of British assistance, or even of abstention from competition, the effect is not unsatisfactory.

As regards the Sultan's message to your Lordship I do not think it can be taken seriously. It was prompted probably by a desire to say something agreeable or possibly inspired by Anthopoulo Pasha, who is apt to think that he is promoting friendly relations between the two countries by conveying assurances which are not intended, even in their utterance, to be carried out.

In the present state of pecuniary embarrassment the idea of the Ottoman Government being able to raise 12,000,000*l.* for the construction of a railway like the one in question is absurd, and on a par with His Majesty's late Iradé to his Council of Ministers to purchase the Constantinople quays from the French Construction Company.

My idea is that [illegible] later, if the Germans persist, they will obtain the Concession on fairly reasonable terms, but that the difficulties in their way are so great that at the present moment the German Emperor would probably appreciate any support that would turn the scale in his favour.

It is therefore a matter for consideration whether this support should not be given by Her Majesty's Embassy. For my part, I would like it to be accorded as the result of a request from the German Government, and combined with some understanding [illegible] in the prolongation of [illegible] Aidin Railway would at the same time be amalgamated with the larger enterprise would not, I think, be unacceptable to the owners of the English line, and it certainly would be in the long run to the advantage of British trade and influence.

I have, &c.
(Signed) N. R. O'CONOR.

No. 53.

Sir N. O'Conor to the Marquess of Salisbury.—(Received November 13.)

(No. 527.)
My Lord, *Constantinople, November 9, 1899.*

IN my despatch No. 510 of the 5th instant, I reported the election by the Syrian members of the Synod of the Russian candidate, Mgr. Malateos, as Patriarch of Antioch.

I now learn by telegraph from Her Majesty's Consul at Damascus that the Vali has received a telegram from Constantinople announcing the recognition of this election by the Sultan and the Porte. Mr. Richards reports that the Vali refuses to allow the three dissentient Bishops of the Greek party to leave Damascus, unless they either recognize the Patriarch or resign their Sees.

Mr. Richards adds that the news of Mgr. Malateos' recognition has been received with great rejoicings by the community.

I have, &c.
(Signed) N. R. O'CONOR.

No. 54.

Sir N. O'Conor to the Marquess of Salisbury.—(Received November 20.)

(No. 529.)
My Lord, *Constantinople, November 11, 1899.*

I HAVE had the honour to furnish your Lordship from time to time with somewhat full reports regarding the spread of Russian influence in Syria and Palestine, and more especially respecting the action of Russia in connection with the recent election of an Orthodox Greek Patriarch of Antioch, the history of which struggle, in its earlier stages, is briefly given in Mr. Norman's Memorandum inclosed in my despatch No. 203 of the 27th April last. In my last despatch on this subject, No. 527, of the 9th instant, I informed your Lordship of the recognition by the Sultan and the Porte of the election of the Syrian candidate, Mgr. Malateos, marking the complete success of the efforts of the Russian party. I have now the honour to transmit herewith copy of a despatch

from Her Majesty's Consul at Damascus stating on reliable authority that vigorous preparations are being made to follow up this success by the capture of three vacant Bishoprics for adherents of the Syrian or "National" party, and adding some interesting information regarding the latest developments of the Russian campaign.

I understand that the French Embassy are seriously concerned at the remarkable progress of this propaganda, against which the Catholic party have been quite unable to make any headway.

I have, &c.
(Signed) N. R. O'CONOR.

Inclosure in No. 54.

Consul Richards to Sir N. O'Conor.

(No. 58.)
Sir, *Damascus, October 26, 1899.*

I HAVE the honour to report to your Excellency that I have received information, from what I may describe as a fairly reliable, source to the effect that strenuous efforts will be made to secure the three vacant Sees of Erzeroum, Lattakia, and Zableh for adherents of the "Syrian" or "National" party of the Orthodox Church, as soon as the election of Mgr. Malateos is confirmed by the Porte. The candidates for these Bishoprics are said to be the Archimandrites Boulos Abou Adhal, of Damascus; Gerassimos Mesarrah, of Alexandria; and Raphael Hawawini, of New York.

I should [illegible] are natives of Damascus, and that Hawawini received his education in Russia. I am also informed that M. Anitchkoff (*vide* my despatch No. 20 of the 5th April last), when here, promised the "National" Bishops and some leading members of the community, that he would do all that lay in his power to secure for them the funds necessary for the foundation of a Theological College in connection with the Convent of Deir Balamend, near Tripoli in Syria. The Russian Consul—now Consul-Gouend—who has lately returned to Damascus, has, it is reported, brought back word that the Russian Panslav Society has undertaken to carry out this project, a large sum amounting to 200,000 roubles—say 22,500*l.* having been actually set aside for this purpose, as well as for the support of existing Greek schools in this province and in those of Beirut and the Lebanon. The projected College to which, as soon as it is completed and opened, two Russian professors will be sent, will be under the general superindence of the officials of the Société de Palestine.

I cannot of course guarantee the truth of the above, but trust that events will prove that in the main the statement is correct.

I have, &c.
(Signed) W. S. RICHARDS.

No. 55.

Sir N. O'Conor to the Marquess of Salisbury.—(Received November 27.)

(No. 533.)
My Lord, *Constantinople, November 18, 1899.*

I HAVE the honour to transmit to your Lordship herewith copy of a despatch which I have received from Her Majesty's Consul at Erzeroum, reporting the death of a notorious Armenian insurrectionary leader named Serope, in an encounter with Imperial troops.

I have, &c.
(Signed) N. R. O'CONOR.

Inclosure in No. 55.

Consul Lamb to Sir N. O'Conor.

(No. 42.)
Sir, *Erzeroum, November 9, 1899.*

THE Dragoman in charge of the Bitlis Vice-Consulate telegraphs under yesterday's date to the effect that a serious encounter recently took place in the Sassoun district between the Imperial troops and a band of Armenians, under the notorious agitator Serope of Akhlat, in which the latter and ten of his followers were killed. Serope's head was brought into Bitlis yesterday.

The official account omits to mention whether any casualties occurred on the side of the troops, but asserts that the district is undisturbed.

In this connection, I may perhaps mention another incident which recently occurred in this vilayet. A notorious Kurdish brigand, known as Lolanli Mamo, whom the authorities had long been endeavouring to capture, was brought in about ten days' ago and handed over to the Government by Hussein-Beg-Zadé Haidar Beg, Chief of the Kozlichan section of the Dersim, who has been rewarded for this service with the third Order of the Medjidieh.

Lolanli Mamo's crimes have been many and heinous, but so little confidence is felt in the judicial section of the administration here that it seems to be generally anticipated that he will even now escape with a brief period of seclusion.

I have, &c.
(Signed) HARRY H. LAMB.

No. 56.

Sir N. O'Conor to the Marquess of Salisbury.—(Received November 27.)

(No. 539.)
My Lord, *Constantinople, November 22, 1899.*

ACCORDING to information received by the Palace, a band of 100 Armenian revolutionists, who are believed to have made their preparations on Persian territory, crossed the frontier from Russia into Turkey, on the 9th instant, in the neighbourhood of Kussédagh.

They were attacked and dispersed by a force of Hamidieh troops and regulars in the plain of Alashkird. The Turks are said to have lost fourteen killed and wounded. The losses on the side of the revolutionists are not stated, but two prisoners were taken and are now under examination. The survivors are believed to have made their way back across the frontier into Russia.

On receiving intelligence of this occurrence the Sultan summoned the Armenian Patriarch to the Palace, and his Beatitude, who had apparently till then had no knowledge of the incursion, has, at the request of His Majesty, directed his Bishops to exert themselves to prevent disorders amongst the Armenians.

I have, &c.
(Signed) N. R. O'CONOR.

No. 57.

Sir N. O'Conor to the Marquess of Salisbury.—(Received November 27.)

(No. 541.)
My Lord, *Constantinople, November 22, 1899.*

I HAVE the honour to transmit herewith a paraphrase of a telegram addressed to me from Kharput by Her Majesty's Vice-Consul at Diarbekir, reporting that he had heard from a trustworthy source that a massacre of Christians had been planned, but had been recently countermanded from Constantinople.

I have brought this intelligence to the knowledge of the Sultan through the medium of the First Secretary, being careful to avoid implying that I attached credence to the rumour. His Majesty stated in reply that he had heard nothing of any unrest at Kharput, and he did not believe that the Christians had any cause for apprehension; he had, however, telegraphed to the Vali for a report.

My United States' colleague, to whom I communicated a paraphrase of Mr. Jones' telegram, and who also approached the Palace on the subject, was assured by Tahsin Boy that the report was absolutely without foundation, and that all was quiet in the Vilayet of Kharput.

I am glad to be able, at the same time, to report that Major Maunsell, writing from Van on the 28th ultimo, says that affairs in his district have been very quiet this year, and that scarcely a single outrage, with the exception of some cattle lifting in the early part of the year, which was quickly suppressed, has occurred as regards the Christian population.

I have, &c.
(Signed) N. R. O'CONOR.

Inclosure in No. 57.

Vice-Consul Jones to Sir N. O'Conor.

(Telegraphic.) P. *Kharput, November 18, 1899.*

INFORMATION has reached me, from a source on which I can depend, that it was intended to carry out a massacre of the whole Christian population here, but that a telegram lately arrived from Constantinople to countermand it. The missionaries are calm, but would be glad if the information were communicated to the United States' Legation. The Christians of the town are very anxious, and those in the surrounding villages yet more disturbed. The streets are patrolled every night by cavalry, and all the guards have been increased.

No. 58.

Sir N. O'Conor to the Marquess of Salisbury.—(Received December 4.)

(No. 548.)
My Lord, *Constantinople, November 27, 1899.*

WITH reference to my despatch No. 539 of the 21st instant, I have the honour to transmit herewith copy of a despatch from Her Majesty's Consul at Erzeroum giving some further particulars respecting the recent raid of Armenian insurrectionaries into Turkish territory.

Mr. Lamb adds that a report is current that as an outcome of this incursion the village of Khanzar, which was entered by the raiders, has now been sacked by Kurds, and its male population massacred.

I have, &c.
(Signed) N. R. O'CONOR.

Inclosure in No. 58.

Consul Lamb to Sir N. O'Conor.

(No. 43.)
Sir, *Erzeroum, November 13, 1899.*

I REGRET to have to report what appears to indicate a renewal of activity on the part of the Armenian insurrectionary agents. In addition to the incident reported in my preceding despatch, which resulted in the death of one of their most notorious leaders, it is reported from Alashgherd that on Wednesday last, the 8th instant, a band of Armenians, which was at first estimated at from 100 to 200, but is now placed as low as 50, armed with Russian rifles, crossed the frontier into that district and entered the village of Khanzar. News of their advent was sent to the authorities at Toprak-Kaleh, about 15 miles' distant, by a certain Dervish Agha, a Kurdish Notable established in the village, upon learning which the insurrectionaries appear to have attacked his house, killing him, his brother, and several other Kurds.

The Kaimakam of Toprak-Kaleh hastened to the spot with a small force of gendarmes and Hamidieh cavalry, and in the encounter which ensued it is officially stated that about fifteen insurrectionaries and twenty or thirty villagers were shot, while on the other side a lieutenant of the Hamidiehs and a certain Iskendar Boy, a

close connection of the Erzeroum Alai Beyi Ahmed Pasha, were likewise killed, together with ten or twelve of their men.

The remnant of the band appear to have regained the Russian frontier.

It is reported in Erzeroum that the village of Khanzar was subsequently looted, and the entire male population massacred by the surrounding Kurds, but this report is not yet substantiated. If it proves to be correct, however, that will presumably only mean that the aim of those who instigated these outrages has been attained.

I have, &c.
(Signed) HARRY H. LAMB.

P.S.—I am informed that, in consequence of these events, the 24th regiment of cavalry, hitherto stationed at Tahir Hodja, has been ordered to proceed to Alashgherd.

H. H. L.

No. 59.

Sir N. O'Conor to the Marquess of Salisbury.—(*Received December 4.*)

(No. 550.)
My Lord, *Constantinople, November 27, 1899.*

WITH reference to my despatch No. 529 of the 14th instant and previous correspondence, I have the honour to transmit to your Lordship herewith copies of three further despatches from Her Majesty's Consul at Damascus relative to the election of an Orthodox Greek Patriarch of Antioch.

Mr. Richards gives an interesting account of the ceremony of "enthronement," at which the Russian Consul-General seems to have been a prominent figure. The Vali appears to have resorted to the most drastic measures to compel the four Bishops of the Greek party to recognize the election, but was successful only in the case of Mgr. Serafim, of Hieropolis, who states that he submitted under pressure. All four prelates finally succeeded in effecting their departure from Damascus, though not without leaving a portion of their robes and other episcopal appointments behind them.

I have, &c.
(Signed) N. R. O'CONOR.

Inclosure 1 in No. 59.

Consul Richards to Sir N. O'Conor.

(No. 62.)
Sir, *Damascus, November 6, 1899.*

WITH reference to my despatch No. 57 of the 21st ultimo, and many previous despatches on the same subject, I have the honour to inform your Excellency that the Vali received a telegram from Constantinople yesterday morning informing him that the Council of Ministers having decided to recognize and confirm the recent election of Mgr. Malatios to the Patriarchal throne of Antioch, the Sultan had issued an Imperial Iradé in this sense.

Nazim Pasha hastened to communicate this fact to the Patriarch elect, who, as well as the majority of his community, received the news with great rejoicings, of which the prolonged ringing of the Cathedral bells, and the offering up of a special prayer for the Sultan, were the immediate manifestations.

Later on in the day Mgr. Neofytios, Bishop of Aleppo, who is one of the four Bishops of the Greek party, left the Patriarchate where he has hitherto resided, and took rooms in one of the hotels, with the intention of leaving Damascus as soon as possible.

Benjamin, Bishop of Diarbekir, another member of the same party, tried to follow this example, in which, however, he was foiled temporarily by the action of the Vali, who sent a party of police to the Patriarchate with orders to retain the Bishop's baggage. These boxes were opened and searched by the police in the presence of their owner, the Bishop of Akkar, of the Syrian party, and an Archimandrite, and some of the episcopal robes, a mitre, and a crozier were, in spite of the vehement protestations of Bishop Benjamin, taken out and retained by the Bishop of the opposite faction.

I understand that it is maintained by the Patriarch elect and others of his party that certain properties, viz., vestments, ornaments, &c., belonging to the Patriarchate have mysteriously disappeared during the interregnum, and it is hinted, though very vaguely, that perhaps Bishop Benjamin knows more about these thefts than he is willing to say. Be that as it may, the latter succeeded, after considerable altercation, in obtaining a receipt from the Bishop of Akkar for the things which had been retained by him. This done, the Bishop of Diarbekir joined his brother Bishop of Aleppo at the hotel Damas.

In the meantime, the latter had been to see the Vali, who spoke to him in very strong terms to the effect that he should not leave Damascus unless he either recognized the Patriarch Malatios, or, in case of refusal, resigned his See.

Bishop Neofytios is said to have replied that he accepted neither alternative, and, moreover, he refused to acknowledge the Vali's right to dictate to him in matters of a purely ecclesiastical nature, and, in conclusion, defied him to prevent his leaving Damascus if and when he chose. I am informed that soon after his return to the hotel, where he was joined by the Bishop of Diarbekir, sentries were, by order of the Vali, placed at the doors of the hotel with instructions, it is said, to prevent by force, if necessary, the departure of the two Bishops. There seems, however, some doubt as to this.

Of the two remaining Greek Bishops who are still at the Patriarchate, viz., Germanos, Bishop of Cilicia, who for some time was Acting Patriarch and Seraphim, of Damascus, a Bishop in Partibus, it is not known yet what line of conduct they intend to pursue in consequence of the Vali's ultimatum, which has been communicated to them as well.

As regards Mgr. Seraphim, who is very old, and, having no diocese, does not count for much—no great importance is attached to his decision one way or the other. On the other hand, the attitude which Mgr. Germanos intends to assume interests his ecclesiastical adherents very deeply, and speculation is rife among them as to what he will do.

In conclusion, I should state that the ceremonial investiture of the new Patriarch is to take place next Sunday, the 12th instant.

I have this day communicated the gist of the above to your Excellency by telegram.

I have, &c.
(Signed) W. S. RICHARDS.

P.S.—I have just heard that Mgr. Seraphim has yielded in the matter of the recognition of the new Patriarch, whose hands he has kissed in token of submission. Bishop Germanos, on the other hand, has left the Patriarchate and joined his brother Bishops at the hotel Damas. I am also informed that the Chief of Police has, by orders of the Vali, told the landlord of the hotel that he held him responsible for the safe keeping of the three Bishops.

W. S. R.

Inclosure 2 in No. 59.

Consul Richards to Sir N. O'Conor.

(No. 65.)
Sir, *Damascus, November 13, 1899.*

WITH reference to my despatch No. 62 of the 6th instant, I have the honour to inform your Excellency that the ceremony of "enthronement" of the newly-elected Greek Orthodox Patriarch took place yesterday morning, the 12th instant. The Patriarch elect, accompanied by all the Bishops of his party (only five here at present), the Russian Consul-General and his staff, other members of the Consular Body, and a very numerous general company, left the Patriarchate for the Cathedral at 8·15 A.M. Here, at the entrance of the building, the Bishops proceeded to array His Beatitude in a special robe, after which he advanced to the choir, where he took up a position facing the congregation. The Archimandrite Boulos then addressed the Patriarch, informing him that he had been elected unanimously [*sic*] by his brother Bishops, the clergy, and the people. He was followed by the Metropolitan of Beirout (the senior Bishop present), who, while presenting the Patriarch with the crozier, made a short speech consisting largely of advice and exhortation as to his future conduct. The Patriarch, followed by the Bishops and clergy, then proceeded to the "throne," on which he seated himself while the others grouped themselves round about him. The

Patriarch then solemnly blessed all present, after which he descended the throne, and, going to the lower part of the church, was disrobed by the Bishops and invested with the full Patriarchal robes for the purpose of celebrating the mass. This, then, he proceeded to do, assisted by the Bishops and priests, the ceremony being a very lengthy one, lasting two and a-half hours. Towards the close of the mass the Bishop of Tripoli mounted the pulpit, and delivered an address of some quarter of an hour's duration. At its termination a special prayer was offered up for the Sultan, after which the service of the mass was continued. As soon as it was finished the Patriarch, taking his stand on the top of the steps leading to the alter, presented consecrated bread to those of the congregation who desired to partake of it, the Russian Consul being the first to advance for that purpose. At the termination of this ceremony the Patriarch and the attending clergy retired for the purpose of disrobing, after which they left the Cathedral and proceeded to the Patriarchate, where a reception was held, lasting about an hour. Three speeches were then made, of which two were by prominent members of the community, and the third by one of the school teachers, who is at the same time a Protestant. This latter oration appears to have excited no small admiration on account of its eloquence. With the exception of frequent expressions of gratitude to the Sultan, and fervent prayers for his long life and welfare, no political allusions whatever were made by the speakers, nor, indeed, at any time either in the Patriarchate or the Cathedral. All three speakers, however, declared that the day was a memorable one in the annals of the Greek Church, of which it inaugurated the independence, and they expressed a hope that henceforth its anniversary would be kept as a holiday for all time.

Sweetmeats were then distributed to all present, who subsequently took their departure.

I should state that the Vali was represented during these ceremonies by Husrev Pasha, the Commandant of gendarmerie and the Dragoman of the vilayet, while Hassan Pasha, the Military Commandant of the city, was sent on the part of the Mushir, who also permitted the military band to play in the court-yard of the Patriarchate during and after the ceremony.

In the evening the Russian Consul-General and his staff dined with the Patriarch and Bishops.

Those parts of the town in the Christian quarter which are inhabited by members of the Greek Orthodox community were profusely decorated and illuminated in honour of the occasion.

I have, &c.
(Signed) W. S. RICHARDS.

Inclosure 3 in No. 59.

Consul Richards to Sir N. O'Conor.

(No. 67.)
Sir, *Damascus, November* 14, 1899.

WITH reference to my despatch No. 62 of the 6th instant, I have the honour to inform your Excellency that the three Bishops of the Greek party, whose removal from the Patriarchate to the hotel Damas I reported in that despatch, left Damascus by train for Beirout on the morning of the 12th instant. They were accompanied, it appears, by Mgr. Sofaphin, Bishop of Eirenopolis (so called, an imaginary diocese), who declares that he was forced against his will and better judgment to kiss the hand of the Patriarch, an act of submission of which he now repents.

Your Excellency will understand that these four dissentient Bishops of Tarsus, Diarbekir, Aleppo, and Eirenopolis have succeeded in leaving Damascus without recognizing the new Patriarch. Whether they will be forced to do so later on, or resign their Bishoprics, remains to be seen.

It would appear that not only has the Bishop of Diarbekir left behind him the vestments, &c., the confiscation of which I reported in the despatch under reference, but Mgr. Semphin, also, has been forced to abandon robes which he values at 150*l.* When at the hotel he sent to the Patriarchate for them, but their restitution being refused he left Damascus without them.

I have, &c.
(Signed) W. S. RICHARDS.

No. 60.

Sir N. O'Conor to the Marquess of Salisbury.—(Received December 4.)

(No. 552.)
My Lord, *Constantinople, November* 29, 1899.

WITH reference to your Lordship's despatch No. 97 of the 1st May last, and other correspondence, respecting Major Maunsell's recent topographical journey, I have the honour to transmit to your Lordship herewith copy of a despatch which I have received from that officer, containing some political notes upon portions of the Diarbekir, Bitlis, and Erzeroum Vilayets.

Major Maunsell promises shortly to forward the military sketches and reports made on his journey.

I have, &c.
(Signed) N. R. O'CONOR.

Inclosure in No. 60.

Major Maunsell to Sir N. O'Conor.

(No. 43.)
Sir, *Van, October* 30, 1899.

I HAVE the honour to forward the following notes of the outlying districts through which I passed in the Diarbekir, Erzeroum, and Bitlis Vilayets in August and September:—

Leaving Van, I passed into the Caza of Mukus, which belongs to this vilayet, and comprises one deep mountain valley, with several narrow side valleys, in which are a number of villages. It is impossible in such restricted ground to cultivate sufficient corn, and the Armenians complain of the restrictions which prevent their going, as formerly, to earn a livelihood in summer in Roumania and other parts.

The relations between Christians and Moslems here have always been very good, and no massacres took place.

This is largely due to the influence of several Kurd Beys, the most influential of whom is Murtulla Bey.

There are also Suleiman Bey, a veteran who fought at Silistria and Sebastopol, with his son, Izzisher Bey.

Also Shevki Bey and Nouri Bey.

Murtulla Bey wished this spring to leave Mukus and go to Constantinople, but was finally dissuaded by the Vali, who thought his presence necessary in the district.

A section of the nomad Miran Kurds, under Mustapha Pasha (a Hamidieh officer), encamp on the uplands east and south of Mukus.

While in summer quarters this year they have been quiet, but on their way down to Jezire, on the Tigris, for the winter, Mustapha Pasha took occasion to raid a number of villages of Muhammad Agha, of Shernakh (Agha-i-Sor), with whom he has long been at feud.

Muhammad Agha wished to take revenge, but was restrained by the Government; he has never consented to form Hamidieh regiments, and has usually been hostile to the Turks, while Mustapha Pasha, who commands a Hamidieh regiment, is given a number of zaptiehs to accompany him to his summer quarters, and enable him to better ward off any attack from Shernakh.

Hajji Agha, the notorious chief of the Hartoshi Kurds, who usually raids the Nestorians of Tiari in the summer, has also been quiet until he reached his winter quarters, north of Mosul, where, I understand, the local Kurds rose in a body and objected to his coming into their country at all.

The Government solved the question by inducing Hajji Agha to move across the Tigris to Nisibin, where he will meet other tribes, and doubtless spend the winter in internecine quarrels and raids.

It is interesting to note how completely Murtulla Bey and others in Mukus despised those Kurds who had become Hamidieh, and accepted various ranks from the Government.

These Kurds' knowledge of other Chiefs and their characteristics was very

extensive, ranging from Ibrahim Pasha of the Milli, near Diarbekir, to Muhammad Pasha of the Jaf tribe, near Sulaimania.

Notwithstanding many inter-tribal feuds, there is certainly a considerable national spirit among the Kurds, and this is by no means friendly to the Turkish Government.

From Mukus I passed along a high watershed range, occupied by the Alikanli Kurds as their summer quarters, and reached Sa'irt through Shirwan.

The Alikanli had just concluded an inter-tribal fight for the election of a Chief, the fight lasting three days, with the loss of three killed to the beaten party, who drew off to another pasture.

Shirwan is an extremely fertile and well-watered district, but scarcely sufficiently cultivated, and with many small villages. In its eastern part are several Catholic-Armenians villages under the priests in Sa'irt.

There are also three Armenian villages which became Moslem at the time of the massacres, and still remain so; but another, Khaudek, has recently returned to Christianity without any difficulty.

At the same time, Sa'irt is an extremely fanatical place, and in its vicinity live numerous Kurdish Sheikhs, usually hostile to Christians.

From there to Diarbekir I took the direct route by Elmadin and the Tigris.

Of this wonderfully fertile country, Sir W. Everett, in a despatch of January 1885, wrote that "a sadder spectacle could hardly be witnessed than that which meets the eye of a traveller from Sa'irt to Diarbekir, where ruined villages and deserted lands testify to a decay that threatens to depopulate the country."

This remains true to-day, and at various points on the road the zaptieh pointed out the residence of a famous brigand, his misdeeds, and the futile efforts of the Government to effectually deal with him.

Bisher Agha, of the settled Penjinan tribe, living at Mamrib, was a notable example.

The numerous Yezidi villages that used formerly to exist in this region have almost entirely disappeared, only three being noticed.

Only the Kurd Beys become rich. The settled villagers are wretchedly poor, afraid to cultivate more than a bare sufficiency of the splendid soil close by their doors.

In the Elmadin Caza of the Diarbekir Vilayet some Armenian and Jacobite villagers are met with, and the situation brightens somewhat, while more land is in cultivation.

The Armenians seem to be more independent, and to have adopted the Kurdish manner to a certain extent, in contrast to those on the plains of Van and Mush.

At Diarbekir the Vali was absent, but I was cordially received by Tewfik Bey, the Military Commandant, since appointed as Frontier Commandant at Kara Kilisse, and the Mektubji.

Leaving Diarbekir, I passed through Haini and the Nerib district to Palu.

Until some twelve years ago Nerib was practically independent and defied Turkish authority, but has now been thoroughly subdued.

It contains chiefly small villages with terraced cultivation on the slopes of the wooded valley of Karabeighan.

Ahmed Agha and Feizulla are the principal Chiefs, and the people are entirely Zaza speaking.

From Palu I went to Erzeroum by Temran.

In the Caza of Kighi is a large and fairly flourishing Armenian population: Kighi itself has 300 Armenian houses out of a total of 400, Chamakjilar 200, Kamuk 150, Temran 250, and Hassoinik 200 houses.

Their relations with the local Kurds are very friendly, and the Beys protected them during the massacres.

They suffer chiefly from raids by Hamidieh of the Jibranli Kurds from the east, and a month previous to my arrival a rich Armenian had been murdered and his house in Temran pillaged almost in broad daylight.

They complained also of raids by the Dersim Kurds from the west, but could give me no recent details of these.

In the Caza of Kizil Kilisse, on the eastern edge of the Dersim country, the Turkish Government makes practically no headway among the mountain tribesmen, and authority scarcely extends much beyond the barracks and Government buildings of Kizil Kilisse itself.

Thus the state of affairs remains much the same as described in Sir W. Everett's despatch on the Dersim in January 1885.

Overtures have been made to the Dersimlis by the Government to form Hamidieh infantry regiments, but in no case have they accepted them.

Leaving Erzeroum I passed to Chabakchur through a country exclusively inhabited by the Hamidieh of the Jibranli Kurds, with some Armenians in the principal villages, who occupy practically the position of serfs.

At the time I passed through the Kurds were much excited at the action of the Government in arresting and taking to Erzeroum a number of Jibranli and Zirrekanli Chiefs for a serious inter-tribal fight.

I was constantly asked as to what I thought the Government intended to do with these men. Some, they said, were certain to be hung; others had already been executed, while more were to be taken towards Constantinople and thrown overboard *en route*.

The rumours of hanging were probably brought about by an Armenian who was hung in the market square while I was in Erzeroum.

I understand the Government has since released the Kurds.

It was fully admitted to me by the Kurds, that most of the prisoners deserved hanging, as, for instance, Ahmed Bimbashi, of Shorik, had committed thirty murders himself.

This feeling shows, I think, how easily the Government can enforce its authority on the Hamidieh when it wishes.

Sometimes, I believe, the Government protests that it fears organized revolt if it took too severe action against the Hamidieh; but in this case, and in others near Van, the Kurds are always quick enough to submit when they see the Government is in earnest.

In the Chabakchur plain are chiefly villages of Zaza-speaking Kurds, with a few Armenians in the principal villages.

They still keep up, to a certain modified extent, the system of "Dereboys."

In each village there is a prominent Kurd with a good deal of power in his immediate neighbourhood.

They vary greatly, as will be seen from the following examples:—

In Sinsor is Suleiman Bey, a good man, and much liked.

In Madrak, some 3 miles further south, is Hajji Bey, a noted brigand and an overbearing man.

In Takoran, 12 miles further, is Ibrahim Bey, about whom nothing was said.

On the other bank of the Murad, Yusuf Bey of Korka, entered a long complaint against Ahmed Bey living in a village 2 miles higher up, who, he said, had not long before descended on his village and completely sacked his house.

The Zaza-speaking Kurds of the nahids of Az, Polkh, and Yenmj between Chabakchur and Palu, applied this spring to be allowed to furnish Hamidieh, but their application was refused.

Passing through Mush I met the newly-appointed Mutessarif, promoted from Kaimakam of Aivali in the Smyrna Vilayet.

He struck me as a most capable and energetic official, and well suited to such a difficult sandjak as that of Mush.

I may mention that he was most cordial in his reception, and accompanied me out of the town for an hour's distance with the local officials and an escort of cavalry.

Mush sandjak is now quite quiet, and the excitement and revolutionary feeling which existed in the spring has now subsided.

I hear from certain sources that a few days ago the celebrated Armenian brigand, Sirop, with all his band, numbering thirteen, were killed by troops and zaptiehs at Gheliguzin in Sasun.

This removes a great source of trouble and disturbance to the Mush and Bitlis Vilayets for the last two years, and will go far towards stamping out the last of the revolutionary movement there.

One zaptieh is said to have been killed in the fight; and Sirop's wife, who was armed with a rifle, was captured alive and sent to Bitlis.

I have, &c.

(Signed) F. R. MAUNSELL.

No. 61.

Sir N. O'Conor to the Marquess of Salisbury.—(Received December 4.)

(No. 553.)
My Lord, *Constantinople, November 29, 1899.*

WITH reference to my despatch No. 519 of the 8th instant, I have the honour to transmit herewith copy of a despatch from Her Majesty's Vice-Consul at Van, giving an account of an incursion recently made across the Persian frontier into Turkish territory by a band of Haideranli Kurds. The Haideranli Tahir Khan, by whom, as Major Maunsell says, the raid was certainly organized, is the Kurdish Chief, resident in Persia, referred to in his despatch No. 40 of the 4th ultimo as one of those who are completely under Russian influence; and he has this year already made two serious raids across the border, quite unprovoked by the residents on the Turkish side.

I would call your Lordship's attention to the concluding paragraph of Major Maunsell's despatch, in which he notes that large numbers of Armenians of the poorer classes have of late made their way from his vilayet into Russian territory; a fact which he attributes to the prevailing high prices of bread, and the unfavourable outlook as regards the food supply.

I have, &c.
(Signed) N. R. O'CONOR.

Inclosure in No. 61.

Major Maunsell to Sir N. O'Conor.

(No. 11.)
Sir, *Van, November 12, 1899.*

I HAVE the honour to report that I have just returned from visiting the Bergri Chza and the Abagha Plain.

While proceeding thither up the valley of the Mermid River I met a force of some 300 Sheveli Kurds just returning from a fight, lasting through the night and the same forenoon, with a raiding party of Persian Haideranli Kurds.

These latter had carried off 700 sheep from the Sheveli village of Rahmin, on which the Sheveli, who supply a Hamidieh Regiment, collected their forces and pursued, overtaking them in the Mermid Valley at the village of Yarimkaya. A prolonged fight, with much expenditure of cartridges and little loss of life, as is usual in these cases, ensued, with the result that 150 sheep were recovered, and the remainder carried off into Persia.

There happened to be a small post of a sergeant and four men of regular infantry from Serai, at Yarimkaya, who turned out to assist the Sheveli to recover their sheep.

The sergeant was killed and his Mauser rifle captured, while two other of the soldiers were frightened into surrendering their Mausers as well.

A Yezidi who went to help the Sheveli was also killed, together with one of the Haideranli raiders.

It is certain that this raiding party, which penetrated 35 miles into Turkish territory, was organized by Tahir Khan, a Haideranli Chief who lives at Kara Aine in Persia, and has already made two serious raids this year.

These have been absolutely unprovoked by the Kurds on this side of the border, who have been kept in a most creditable state of subjection this year. Tahir Khan and the Khan of Maku are entirely under Russian influence, and it certainly appears that these raids are part of an organized scheme to keep this country disturbed. The raiders were said to number 100 men, and were doubtless assisted by some of the Haideranli in the Abagha Plain; also they penetrated 35 miles before committing the outrage, which could scarcely be done without assistance.

I passed up the valley and stayed at the Haideranli village of Haspiresh, and found the Headmen and all fighting men had just fled to Kara Aine, so that presumbly they had joined in the raid.

Kop Mehmet Bey, a Haideranli Chief, lives at Kuchan in the centre of the Abagha Plain, and is an exceptionally enlightened and good specimen of a Kurd Chief.

He protects Christians, and has encouraged a number of Armenians to settle in Kuchan.

Mustafa Agha, another Haideranli Chief in Abagha, living at Nushehr, is of an opposite type, and generally supposed to be allied with Tahir Khan and the Persian section.

I saw something also of the Mukuri Kurds, who also give Hamidieh and live in the Akhorik Plain south of Abagha.

Ibrahimbey is their Chief, and is a very enlightened and good specimen of a Kurd Chief also.

In the Karaso district, just west of Akhorik, is a group of eight Yezidi villages whom I visited.

They comprise Chibukli, in which lives Kalib Agha, their principal Chief, Dirjemmid, Seidibeg, Khojali, Shemseddin, Yarimkaya, Chakmak and Kalejik, making altogether some 270 houses.

They are in a contented and fairly prosperous condition, and have to a great extent identified themselves with the Kurds, as, for instance, in the above-mentioned raid, many of them turned out to assist the Sheveli.

For the last six weeks a constant exodus of the poorer class of Armenians has taken place from this vilayet into Russia.

The fugitives, who have no permission from the Government here to leave, first find their way into Persia by any of the numerous passes not watched by customs posts, and then into Russia.

Some estimate that the numbers who have already left exceed those who left at the time of the massacres.

The poor harvest, high price of bread, and generally bad outlook for food during the coming winter are generally stated to be the causes of this exodus.

The price of bread in Van still continues at 60 to 70 paras an oke.

The Vali of Bitlis has now given permission for export of wheat from his vilayet, and some is also being brought from Diarbekir before the winter closes.

I have, &c.
(Signed) F. R. MAUNSELL.

No. 62.

Sir N. O'Conor to the Marquess of Salisbury.—(Received December 4.)

(No. 554. (Confidential.)
My Lord, *Constantinople, November 30, 1899.*

IN my Confidential despatch No. 526 of the 9th instant, I had the honour to report on the attitude of the Porte with regard to the future railway to Bagdad and the Persian Gulf.

Notwithstanding the urgent representations of the German Ambassador, who claimed the Concession in virtue of a promise said to have been given by the Sultan to the German Emperor, the Ottoman Government were firmly opposed to placing the proposed line in German hands, and the Turkish Ambassador to London was authorized to inform me on the eve of his departure from Constantinople that it had been finally decided to give no Concession and to construct the railway as a Turkish concern, with capital to be raised, if possible, in England.

So the matter stood until last Friday when Baron von Marschall renewed his demands at a personal audience with the Sultan. His Excellency has informed some of his colleagues that on the following day an Imperial Iradé was communicated to him granting the Concession in principle. The details, it seems, are to be determined after the return of the German Technical Commission which is now engaged, as your Lordship is aware, in examining the line of country to be traversed by the railway.

The most important of these is the question of the kilometric guarantee. Not far short of a total of £ T. 1,000,000 per annum is said to be required under this heading, and though in process of time the receipts of the railway will diminish the annual sum payable by the Ottoman Government, it is not likely that for many years there will be much reduction on this account. Meanwhile, only the principle of the guarantee has been admitted, and it may be assumed that when the amount comes to be assessed, and a guarantee has to be found which will satisfy the public investor, long and difficult

negotiations will ensue, leading, quite possibly, to a demand for British financial co-operation.

I do not think, however, that Germany is likely to be discouraged by difficulties of this kind. It has been her practice in similar cases, as for instance in that of the Anatolian Railway, to secure at first a vague promise and then to insist on its fulfilment, notwithstanding the difficulties subsequently raised by the Turks in their endeavours to escape from their engagements.

The Sultan has now bound himself to a railway policy which may exercise an enormous influence on the future of the Turkish possessions in Asia. How far the preponderant position which Germany is securing for herself will force the hand of Russia and compel her to seek for a counterpoise in Northern Asia, China, or Persia, it is, perhaps, too early to speculate. But rumours are afloat that Russia is seeking an important railway Concession in the Erzeroum region, and it is known that they are pushing their railway to the Persian frontier and prospecting for its prolongation into the heart of Persia.

Their activity in these directions is not unlikely to be stimulated by the new Concession to the Germans.

It is understood that the extension of the German line to the Persian Gulf is to be completed within eight years.

I have, &c.
(Signed) N. R. O'CONOR.

No. 63.

Viscount Gough to the Marquess of Salisbury.—(*Received December* 4.)

(No. 283.)
My Lord, *Berlin, November* 29, 1899.

WITH reference to Sir F. Lascelles' despatch No. 225 of the 14th September last, I have the honour to report that the "Kochische Zeitung" of the 26th instant announces that the Turkish Government conceded on the 25th instant to the Anatolian Railway Company the right to construct a railway via Konieh to Bagdad and Bussorah, and that an Imperial Iradé approving of the Concession has been issued.

It is added that the amount of the State guarantee will be decided upon after the return of the prospecting expedition which is now engaged on the survey of the country to be traversed, and that Turkey reserves to herself the right to purchase the line, the management to remain in the hands of the Anatolian Railway Company, unless Turkey herself takes it over. The line is to be constructed in eight years.

The "National Zeitung," in commenting on the above announcement, says that the arrangement is a great triumph for German enterprise in coalition with German capital: that an important commercial means of communication between Constantinople and Bussorah viâ Bagdad will thus be established through the Tigris Euphrates Valley, which passes for being one of the richest portions of the Turkish Empire in Asia Minor; and that the trade of Persia will by this means be brought into direct communication with Constantinople and Europe.

The "Berliner Neueste Nachrichten" speaks of the Concession as a most satisfactory victory won by German enterprise and German diplomacy, which has powerfully supported the endeavours of the successful Company. It is concluded that the route adopted will be from Konieh viâ Ourfa to Mosul, and thence to Bagdad and Bussorah, the whole length of the line being more than 2,000 kilom.—an undertaking which will offer a fruitful field to German engineering skill and German industry, whilst trade and commerce will find new markets in the wealthy lands that will be opened up to them, and fresh impetus through the shortening of the route to India.

The "Frankfurter Zeitung" publishes a telegram which states that not only is the Concession a victory for German diplomacy, but it is more, since it proves that the Sultan's faith in Germany is still unshaken, in spite of the many efforts that have been made to undermine it. The telegram adds that the whole business was considered as having failed but a short time ago, because the Sultan would insist that the line must be the property of Turkey, and only be constructed and worked by the German Company—an engagement which does not appear in the newly-published Iradé.

The Frankfort organ, in reviewing its Constantinople correspondent's telegram, says that only those who know the difficulties which had to be overcome can realize the extent of the victory gained. The Sultan, it says, was never friendlily disposed

towards the English proposals, in spite of the fact that they offered to build the line without a State guarantee, because he detected the strong hand of England bent on political designs behind the financial group. Russian opposition, too, put many obstacles in the way of the accomplishment of the German scheme, but all trace of that disappeared as soon as it was known that the Anatolian Railway Company had associated itself with the French group.

The Sultan, the same paper continues, is overjoyed to see thus the fulfilment of one of his most cherished projects, and counts much upon the military advantages he will derive from the greater facilities of concentrating his troops at any given point, which will enable him to firmly re-establish his authority in certain districts where it has of late been somewhat shaken, whilst he hopes that the construction of the railway will result in as fruitful development of the country through which it will pass as has occurred in the districts traversed by the Anatolian Railway.

For Germany, the article states, in conclusion, the line has, of course, a purely commercial interest, and it is for that reason that the Emperor did not hesitate to associate himself so closely with it, on the clear understanding that Russian interests would in no wise suffer therefrom; and it is now to be hoped that English interests will no longer hesitate to associate themselves with an undertaking that must have advantages for England also, if only in so far that the Indian mail must inevitably be dispatched by the new route eventually, to the mutual advantages of the railway and of England.

The cost of the railway is estimated at 400,000,000 fr. (16,000,000*l.*), the share issues to be spread over a period of five years, the French group participating in the Concession to the extent of 40 per cent., as had been previously arranged.

The "Kochische Zeitung" of to-day's date devotes an extremely lengthy article to the discussion of the whole question and to the many difficulties that the German concessionnaires had to overcome, in the course of which it states that the southern line, namely, that by way of Konieh, Aleppo, and the Euphrates Valley, has been chosen. This does not quite tally with the statement quoted above, which appeared in the "National Zietung," to the effect that the route would be viâ Konieh and Ourfa to Mosul, and thence by the Tigris Valley. It is possible that the choice between the two roads has not yet been finally made, and that no definite decision will be come to until the return of the surveying expedition, which has proceeded south viâ Mosul, and is to return by the Euphrates Valley.

The concluding paragraphs of the article are devoted to showing that the Upper Anatolian highlands are for the most part a desert waste, thanks to the sparseness of the population, and to the rudeness of the implements of cultivation employed by the inhabitants; but that since the land is adapted to the highest possible forms of agriculture, and the climate somewhat similar to that of Germany, it may be expected that at no very distant date the flood of German emigration may be turned from North America, where the German nationality and instincts are inexorably lost in the greater mass of their American fellow labourers, and even from Brazil, where German colonists are founding such a flourishing settlement, to this nearer and happier field for agricultural industry, where the German settlers would congregate together and preserve all their national feelings and sentiments.

I have, &c.
(Signed) GOUGH.

No. 64.

Sir N. O'Conor to the Marquess of Salisbury.—(*Received December* 11.)

(No. 562.)
My Lord, *Constantinople, December* 5, 1899.

WITH reference to my despatch No. 541 of the 21st ultimo, I have the honour to transmit to your Lordship herewith copy of a despatch from Her Majesty's Vice-Consul at Diarbekir on the subject of the report referred to in his telegram of the 18th ultimo, that a massacre of Christians had been recently planned at Kharput.

I have, &c.
(Signed) N. R. O'CONOR.

Inclosure in No. 64.

Vice-Consul Jones to Sir N. O'Conor.

(No. 36.)
Sir, *Kharput, November* 21, 1899.

I HAVE the honour to report that considerable unrest prevails among the Armenians of this city in consequence of a rumour to the effect that a general massacre of Christians had been decided upon, and although the authorities have taken measures to inspire confidence by increasing the guards and causing the streets to be patrolled at night by cavalry, the native Christians are not as yet free from anxiety.

Only two or three days ago a Turk informed an Armenian friend that the Christians had recently been in great peril, but, he added, that for the present the danger had passed.

I am assured, however, on reliable authority, that matters had proceeded so far that those Turks who during the last massacres had sheltered Christians in their houses were this time carefully warned that in the event of their attempting to repeat that policy they would themselves be attacked. It was added that the word had been passed round that on this occasion plundering would not be permitted, as all the property of the Christians would revert to the Government.

Whatever the instructions sent in this sense from the Central Government—and the humane character of his Excellency the present Vali of this province precludes the possibility that this idea of a repitition of the horrors of 1895 originated with him—the latest orders from Constantinople have been to countermand the intended massacre, and I am told that the Military Commander has issued orders for the immediate dispersal of any gathering that may be formed in any public place.

It appears that a Kurdish Chief who came to Kharput some days ago in order to make inquiries as to his prospective share in the promised massacre was informed that his services would not be required.

It must be admitted that on this occasion the secret has been well kept, as it has not been allowed to leak out until a change of policy had been decided upon, and this fact, taken alone, would seem to imply that the report of an intended massacre had been exaggerated; but the unusual precautions adopted by the authorities to quell any attempt to create disorder clearly betray their fears of an outbreak, which they could hardly even pretend to ascribe to any apprehension of an uprising on the part of the native Christians.

I have, &c.
(Signed) J. FRANCIS JONES.

No. 65.

Sir N. O'Conor to the Marquess of Salisbury.—(Received December 11.)

(No. 568.)
My Lord, *Constantinople, December* 6, 1899.

WITH reference to my despatches No. 539 of the 22nd November and No. 548 of the 27th November, relative to the recent raid of Armenian insurrectionaries from Russian territory into the Alashghird district, and the unfortunate results to which this incursion led, I have the honour to report that details of the occurrence have now reached Constantinople by post, and a rumour became current that very severe reprisals were taken by Kurds against the Armenians of this district.

I learnt the following particulars, confidentially, from the Armenian Patriarch:—

On the 9th November a band of 100 Armenians crossed from Russian territory, armed with Mausers, to Hasdour, a village in the Caza of Bayazid, 48 miles from Toprak Kaleh. The raiders having entered a church, the Mudir of the village summoned them to come out, and was shot. The Hamidieh and some police and irregulars then appeared on the scene, and firing lasted all day, some fifteen being killed on either side. Finally the Armenians broke through. The police and Hamidieh, instead of pursuing, burned the village, including the Gregorian and Catholic churches, and killed 300 Armenians or more. The neighbouring villages of Hoshian, Zedkan, Mollah Suleiman, Amad, and Yanour Tepe were also pillaged.

The Mutessarif of Bayazid appeared as soon as possible, bringing regular troops, which were posted in various villages to prevent pillage and restore order, and he persuaded the Armenian villagers, who had all fled to Toprak Kale, to return to their homes.

Acting on my instructions, Mr. Block inquired of the Grand Vizier as to the truth of this information.

His Highness replied that the inhabitants of the village of Hasdour had evidently been in communication with the insurrectionaries, and that in the course of the affray which occurred in the village thirty or forty of the villagers had been killed. He denied all knowledge of churches being burnt or of pillage taking place in any other villages; and he added that the Mutessarif of Bayazid had at once proceeded to the spot and restored order.

Mr. Block pointed out that it was deplorable that the Kurds should have been allowed to wreak their vengeance on unoffending Armenians, and that the local authorities were most seriously to blame for not distinguishing between innocent and guilty, and allowing reprisals, which were evidently the object of the agitators. He said that if such an incident were repeated it would be likely to cause a recrudescence of the agitation on behalf of the Armenians which had caused so much trouble to the Ottoman Government.

In a private letter which I have to-day received from Her Majesty's Consul at Erzeroum, he confirms the impression that may be gathered from the Patriarch's conversation with Mr. Block—that the higher authorities of the district were really anxious, while punishing the raiders, to prevent, as far as possible, harm to the innocent population, although it is unfortunately the fact that Khanzar Zedikan and Mollah Suleiman were totally devastated.

I learn that the Patriarch has addressed a Memorandum to the Grand Vizier asking that measures should be taken to prevent a recurrence of such a disaster.

I have, &c.
(Signed) N. R. O'CONOR.

No. 66.

Viscount Gough to the Marquess of Salisbury.—(Received December 11.)

No. 301.)
My Lord, *Berlin, December* 5, 1899.

WITH reference to my despatch No. 293 of the 29th ultimo, I have the honour to report that, according to a message published by Wolff's Telegraphic Bureau, the Emperor addressed a telegram to the Sultan from Flushing, in which he expressed his great satisfaction at the grant of the Concession for the Bagdad Railway to the Anatolian Railway Company.

His Majesty saw therein a fresh proof of the Sultan's confidence in German industry. This great enterprise, which owed its origin to the Sultan's wisdom, and which could not fail to promote the ends of peace, would contribute towards the closer union of all nations. The Emperor prayed that the Almighty might lend his protection both to the great work and to His Majesty the Sultan.

In the reply addressed by the Sultan to the Emperor, His Majesty, according to the same authority, expressed the confident hope that the conditions upon which the Concession was granted would be faithfully observed by the representatives of German industry, such observance being in their own interest.

The German Ambassador at Constantinople was received in audience by the Sultan after the Selamlik on the 1st instant, and handed him several albums containing photographs of the present Emperor and his two immediate predecessors, and of the Imperial Family.

A telegram from Constantinople of the 4th instant states that the Sultan has conferred the Grand Cross of the Medjidie Order on Count von Bülow, presumably in recognition of the successful conclusion of the recent negotiations. Count von Bülow received the Grand Cross of the Osmanie Order on the occasion of the Emperor's visit to Constantinople.

I have, &c.
(Signed) GOUGH.

No. 67.

Sir N. O'Conor to the Marquess of Salisbury.—(Received December 18.)

(No. 581.)
My Lord, *Constantinople, December 13, 1899.*

WITH reference to my despatch No. 570 of the 27th ultimo, I have the honour to transmit to your Lordship herewith copy of a despatch which I have received from Her Majesty's Consul at Damascus, reporting the recognition by two of the four dissentient Bishops of the Greek party of Mgr. Malateos, the newly-elected Orthodox Patriarch of Antioch.

I have, &c.
(Signed) N. R. O'CONOR.

Inclosure in No. 67.

Consul Richards to Sir N. O'Conor.

(No. 69.)
Sir, *Damascus, December 2, 1899.*

WITH reference to my despatch No. 67 of the 14th ultimo, reporting the departure from Damascus of the four recalcitrant Bishops of the "Greek" party, I have the honour to inform your Excellency that two of them, viz., those of Tarsus and Diarbekir, have, it would appear, already given in their submission to the newly-elected Patriarch.

I am given to understand that the latter telegraphed a few days ago to all the four Prelates announcing his election to the Patriarchate Throne, his official recognition by the Sultan and the Porte, and, finally, his ceremonial investiture. This being so, the message ran, the Bishop addressed was instructed to make formal submission to his (the Patriarch's) authority, and in token thereof to make mention of his Beatitude's name in the Prayer for the Patriarch, which it is customary to offer up in all Orthodox churches throughout the country.

In reply to this telegram the Bishops of Tarsus and Diarbekir intimated their willingness to accept the *fait accompli*. The Bishop of Aleppo, however, has not so far made any reply, though he has received a second summation couched in still more emphatic terms than the first. I understand that a third telegram will be sent to him in the same sense, and if he still refuses to reply or submit, it is the intention of the Patriarch to appeal to the Minister of Justice and Religion to have him deposed.

As regards Mgr. Seraphim, who has, I understand, accompanied the Bishop of Aleppo to the seat of his (the latter's) diocese, seeing that he is only a Bishop *in partibus* and very old, it is not contemplated to attach any importance to his insubordination, even should it be persisted in.

I have, &c.
(Signed) W. S. RICHARDS.

No. 68.

Sir N. O'Conor to the Marquess of Salisbury.—(Received December 18.)

(No. 582.)
My Lord, *Constantinople, December 14, 1899.*

I HAVE the honour to transmit to your Lordship herewith copy of a despatch which I have received from Her Majesty's Consul at Damascus, reporting that the Defterdar of the Vilayet of Syria has been suspended from the exercise of his functions for failing to supply money for official purposes when called upon to do so.

I have, &c.
(Signed) N. R. O'CONOR.

Inclosure in No. 68.

Consul Richards to Sir N. O'Conor.

(No. 70.)
Sir, *Damascus, December 4, 1899.*

I HAVE the honour to inform your Excellency that Mohammed Emin Ali Bey, the Defterdar of this vilayet, has been suspended from the exercise of his functions, his place being temporarily filled by Edhem Bey, the Defterdar of the Vilayet of Beirut.

It appears that the Mushir, Jevad Pasha, has complained officially of the Defterdar to the Minister for War, for refusing to supply him with such sums as he has from time to time required for the payment of the troops. In addition to this I understand that quite recently the Defterdar, in response to an injunction to send £ T. 15,000 at once to Constantinople, replied that owing to the numerous demands made on him now he was absolutely unable to comply with the order.

It is not clear yet whether the Defterdar is to be definitely dismissed or not.

I have, &c.
(Signed) W. S. RICHARDS.

No. 69.

The Marquess of Salisbury to Sir N. O'Conor.

(No. 271.)
Sir, *Foreign Office, December 19, 1899.*

I HAVE received your Excellency's despatch No. 552 of the 29th ultimo inclosing a report from Major Maunsell upon certain portions of the Vilayets of Diarbekir, Bitlis, and Erzeroum.

I request that you will convey to Major Maunsell my thanks for this communication.

I am, &c.
(Signed) SALISBURY.

No. 70.

Sir N. O'Conor to the Marquess of Salisbury.—(Received December 25.)

(No. 587.)
My Lord, *Constantinople, December 20, 1897.*

WITH reference to my despatch No. 553 of the 29th ultimo, I have the honour to transmit to your Lordship herewith copy of a despatch which I have received from Her Majesty's Vice-Consul at Van reporting on the condition of that vilayet and the Nestorian districts.

I have, &c.
(Signed) N. R. O'CONOR.

Inclosure in No. 70.

Major Maunsell to Sir N. O'Conor.

(No. 46.)
Sir, *Van, November 27, 1899.*

I HAVE the honour to report that, with reference to the recent robbery of Mr. Browne's effects in Tkhub, that Mar Shimun has deprived Malik Babu of his position as Malik, and replaced him by Malik Bakhus, who greatly assisted Mr. Browne and helped to recover his baggage.

He has also excommunicated Babu from the Church.

Malik Bakhus has already done much to break up the band of robbers that Babu had formed.

In a letter dated the 9th November Mr. Browne mentions that the Mutessarif of Bashkala sent troops to Chal, a valley east of Tkhub, and among the Pinianishli

Kurds there, after which he expected they would enter Tiari to collect tribute. He states:—

"Some forty soldiers went to a Kurd village on the borders of Tkhub and Tiari, plundered and ravished women, and shot a Kurd who objected to their taking the women's black turbans from their heads.

"The Kurds begged help from Tiari and Tkhub (Nestorian districts), whose men assembled on the hills, and at daybreak fired a volley in the air, whereupon the soldiers retired, leaving their ammunition, and the Nestorians returned to their villages; but they say now they will not let soldiers into their country without fighting to the last man, and no doubt the Kurds will help them for their good offices."

Generally speaking, the troops have behaved well in Jelu and Diz, and I have heard of no other outrages on their part. This party seem to have got out of hand temporarily.

At the same time, the above seems to show that if the Mutessarif attempts to enter Tiari with troops, he will probably encounter considerable resistance.

The winter has now definitely closed in, and one battalion from Van, which has been in Bashkala during the summer, has now returned here.

Owing to the very high price of barley in Van, the two squadrons of the 23rd Cavalry here have left for Khinis, and the Field Artillery horses (Hungarian importations) have left for Erzeroum for the winter, leaving their guns and equipment here.

Regarding the recent raid by Persian Haideranli Kurds, the sheep taken from Turkish territory have now been recovered, as well as the three Mauser rifles.

The Vali tells me that the Ottoman Government has made several representations to Tehran, but the Persian Government confess their inability to control the Kurds in this corner of Azerbaijan.

The recent raid of Armenian revolutionists into Alashgird, doubtless reported to your Excellency from Erzeroum, has had no disturbing effect in this town.

The military Commandant here remarked that as these men could pass so easily such a closely-guarded frontier, there is no doubt they came with the connivance of the Russian Government.

I have, &c.
(Signed) F. R. MAUNSELL.

No. 71.

Sir N. O'Conor to the Marquess of Salisbury.—(Received December 25.)

(No. 589.)
My Lord, *Constantinople, December 20, 1899.*

I HAVE the honour to state that, according to a telegraphic report which I have received from Her Majesty's Vice-Consul at Van, an encounter took place on the 15th instant between Hamidieh troops and revolutionaries. A band of the latter, fifteen strong, crossed from Persia into Abagha, where they were met by the troops, who killed some of them and took the remainder prisoners. Officials from Van and some regular troops were quickly on the spot.

Major Maunsell states that some Kurds were killed, presumably by the revolutionaries before or during the affray; but adds that, so far as he can learn, the Armenian villagers have not been molested, perhaps, because, as he says, they are known to enjoy the protection of a neighbouring Kurdish Chief.

Another revolutionary band is expected shortly to cross the frontier, and will most likely meet with the same fate as the first.

I have, &c.
(Signed) N. R. O'CONOR.

No. 72.

Sir N. O'Conor to the Marquess of Salisbury.—(Received December 25.)

(No. 591.)
My Lord, *Constantinople, December 21, 1899.*

WITH reference to my despatch No. 581 of the 13th instant, I have the honour to transmit to your Lordship herewith copy of a despatch which I have received from Her Majesty's Consul at Damascus, reporting the deposition of the Orthodox Bishop of Aleppo for refusing to recognize the election of Mgr. Malateos to the Patriarchate of Antioch.

I have, &c.
(Signed) N. R. O'CONOR.

Inclosure in No. 72.

Consul Richards to Sir N. O'Conor.

(No. 73.)
Sir, *Damascus, December 8, 1899.*

WITH reference to my despatch No. 69 of the 2nd instant, I have the honour to inform your Excellency that the Greek Bishop of Aleppo having vouchsafed no reply to three telegrams calling on him to tender his submission to the newly-elected Patriarch, has been deposed by his Beatitude after several long consultations with those members of the Synod who are still there. I understand that an appeal will be made to the Sultan either to exile the recalcitrant Bishop, or, at all events, to remove him from his diocese.

In the meanwhile, the Bishop, who is at Alexandretta, hesitates to continue his journey to Aleppo, where he has every reason to believe that the "native" party, and even the majority of his own clergy, intend to give him a most unpleasant reception. It is even hinted that the Vali of that province will, at the instigation of the Russian Consul, refuse to allow him to enter the city. This, however, must be the merest conjecture.

As regards the Bishops of Tarsus and Diarbekir, I regret to say that my statement in the despatch under reference, viz., that they have recognized the validity of the Patriarchal election, was incorrect. The source from which this information was obtained is usually very reliable. I am sorry that I should have been misinformed on this occasion.

The truth appears to be that a written summons was sent to each of them, not a telegraphic message, as in the case of the Bishop of Aleppo, to which, of course, it is materially impossible that an answer should have been received, the Bishop of Diarbekir being now in Constantinople, where he intends to pass the winter, and the Bishop of Tarsus being at Adana.

The reason why the Patriarchal summons took a different and less expeditious form in their case to that which was adopted when it was communicated to the Bishop of Aleppo appears to be the fact that the "native" party is numerically the stronger in the latter diocese, whereas, in that of Tarsus (Adana) the reverse is the case, and in that of Diarbekir the "native" element is practically non-existent.

So that as far as the Bishop of Aleppo is concerned, the Patriarch and his party can point triumphantly to the fact that the majority of the members of the Greek Church in that diocese are of their way of thinking, and, therefore, opposed to the return of their Bishop, which, of course, is a good argument in favour of his "deposition." In the dioceses of Adana and Diarbekir, on the other hand, this argument does not hold good for the reasons above stated.

I have, &c.
(Signed) W. S. RICHARDS.

P.S.—I have just heard that the Bishop of Aleppo has been summoned to that city by the Vali.

W. S. R.